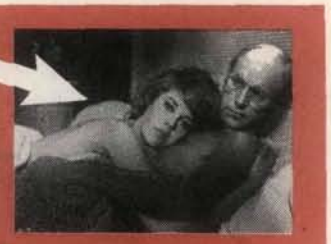
MARCH 22, 2004

Dick & Jane: His 'Other Priority' Revealed!



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LETTERS

Letters

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

Deaniacs Unbowed

Bellingham, Wash.

■ William Greider's "Dean's Rough Ride" [March 8] is one of the best political articles I've read lately. It *was* a wild ride and is only going to get more "interesting" as more people join the struggle to take back our politics and our country. JAMES F. FOX

New Haven, Vt.

■ Thank you, William Greider, for telling the nation about the real Howard Dean, from us Vermonters who have known and loved him for twelve years. Despite the journalistic lynching, we are proud of Howard. His style and his ideas will outlive his candidacy.

SUSAN W. BENNETT

Middletown, Md.

■ A fervent thank you to William Greider for his summary of the Dean campaign. It's especially reassuring to see some of Dr. Dean's more substantive (and inflammatory) statements in print, since the mass media ignored their very existence. For a few short months, I believed that real change at the heart of our political system was possible—that it was really going to happen. I should have known better. But for those months, I was made invulnerable to the disasters of the current Administration and the blunders of the Democratic Party by a joyful and unreasoning hope. Greider has summed up that wild ride, good and bad, with sympathetic yet analytical eyes.

MARC MONTEFUSCO

Savannah, Ga.

■ William Greider has made me feel a little better about the way Dr. Dean was treated and his wonderful points ignored. I will still vote for Dean in the Georgia primary but will hold my nose and vote for the Democratic nominee in November to get rid of Bush. Thanks for the help in overcoming my depression.

A 70-year-old Georgia Deaniac,

NANCY M. SHEA

Brooklyn, NY

■ I am a 22-year-old woman interning for a nonprofit concerned with media rights. I think it's amazing how much the Internet has done for educating the young on what's going on. Everyone now knows MoveOn.org, as William Greider mentioned. Unlike the revolutionaries and activists of the 1960s during the Vietnam War, we will not combat the injustice of our nation's policies with chants and passion (although we feel these beat in our hearts). We will join forces using knowledge, wit, support, and the spread of media literacy to obtain what we desire. By using our intellect and differences, "we shall overcome." LAUREN STRAUB

Boulder, Colo.

■ God bless you, William Greider, for so eloquently summarizing all the reasons I have been and always will be a fervent *Dean*-ocrat.

I am a 47-year-old mother and have never been involved in politics before. Dr. Dean has given me a voice and a fire in the belly that I will use, in concert with the hundreds of thousands of other citizens similarly inspired by the Dean campaign, to "impose new technologies and new social realities on tired old institutions." We are, indeed, "witnessing the early stages of small-d democratic renewal"!

KAREN CONDUFF

New York City

■ Invigorated by Dr. Dean, I was moved for the first time to put my money where my mouth is. Never did that before. I'm 67 and have actively observed and participated in politics for many years—Republican *and* Democrat.

I will *not* transfer my support of Dean to any of the remaining candidates, least of all John Kerry, whose record is long but dismal. Edwards is charming and refreshing but untested. Therefore, I will vote for Dean in the New York primary and throw my support to Democratic Congressional candidates so that Bush and his gangsters can be overturned.

SYLVIA KUROP

Ruckersville, Va.

■ William Greider muses over the age range of Dean's supporters. The media reported that they're mostly young, which confused me, because I've participated in MeetUps, blogforamerica and chatforamerica since last summer. You could argue that people were lying about their age online (though why would you say you were an 80-year-old grandmother?), but at MeetUps the ages were definitely there to see. I'm 33, and there were plenty of others my age, including one of the organizers, but most were older. There were a few exceptions, like a new attendee who had just turned 18 and was excited that she could make her first presidential (primary) vote for Howard Dean. At the same meeting one beautiful, vivacious woman in her 60s reported on her trip to Iowa.

But the greatest part of a MeetUp, and the Dean campaign in general, was the young listening to the old, the old listening to the young, liberals listening to conservatives, conservatives listening to liberals. We all feel that there is something much more important afoot than our own agendas.

When I go to my Dean MeetUp in March I'll know that he's done a good job, because his campaign wasn't just about Howard Dean being President—it was about learning how to change America for the better. And we're not going to give up on that. SUSAN HEROD

Albany, NY

■ I'm one of the 650,000 who signed on to the Dean campaign and one of the 100,000 who gave money. I also wrote letters to Iowans and to New Hampshirites. I followed the blog religiously and still follow it.

I haven't worked for a political campaign since I was in college twenty years ago. I haven't read *The Nation* since I was in college. The Dean campaign inspired my progressive streak, long dormant. We need great change in this country.

TIM GERGICH

San Jose, Calif.

■ As someone who was heavily involved in the Dean campaign, these last weeks have been especially hard. Dean renewed my faith in the ability of the common man and woman to have an effect on politics. And while we certainly did have an effect, it's a crushing blow to see our candidate obliterated and made into a late-night television joke.

It was also very disheartening to see the power the media establishment has over people's opinions. Throughout his campaign, Dean got the shaft when it came to fair news coverage of what the campaign was all about. I can't count the number of times I sat in front of my TV or read a newspaper or magazine and was frustrated beyond expression at how Dean was being portrayed.

I look forward to the next couple of months, when Dean announces his plans for continuing the movement he created. I can only hope it will result in a group to balance out the DLC. The DLC represents the corporate interests in the Democratic Party. DFA will represent the *people* interests in the Democratic Party.

MARC LOVE

Grand Rapids, Mich.

■ I want to express my gratitude for the wonderful article on Governor Dean and his unconscionable treatment by the media and the DNC/DLC. Howard Dean was too much for them because he awakened our yearnings to take our nation back. I will keep Greider's quotes from Dean's speeches so my children and grandchildren will perhaps understand what great hopes abounded in the nation for a brief, wonderful

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EDITORIALS

Kulturkampf, 2004

On pages 11 and 14 of this issue Tom Hayden and Carol Burke recall the culture wars of the Vietnam era, which live on in the odd, enduring hatred of Jane Fonda by conservative vets. The image of "Hanoi Jane" was insinuated into the 2004 presidential race in the form of a doctored photo showing Fonda sharing the stage with John Kerry at an antiwar rally (inspiring our own, less subtle attempts at deception-via-Photoshop in this issue). The stunt was carried out by conservatives trying to discredit Kerry for his antiwar activity following combat in Vietnam, in part to offset George W.'s growing reputation as a slacker who shirked his National Guard duties. The Hanoi Jane smear plays on stereotypes of war opponents, then and now, as morally corrupt, weakening the nation's martial will with their permissiveness and promiscuity. It is no coincidence that such images have surfaced now that the President has announced his support for a constitutional amendment defending the "sanctity of marriage" and as issues like abortion and religion loom large in the 2004 election.

If a new culture war has been joined, however, it's taking place on an altered battlefield. Republicans learned the lessons of 1992, when Pat Buchanan's declaration of a cultural and religious war turned off libertarians, minorities, suburban women and moderates. Thus in 2004, Karl Rove is aiming for a delicate balance between "compassionate conservatism" and appeals to *Passion of the Christ*–lovers. He'd like to build a coalition of evangelicals, traditional Catholics and Rugged-Cross Protestants in states like West Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri and Ohio—without provoking distress in affluent, socially liberal suburbs.

Democrats are nonetheless right to charge that Bush is instigating a culture war to change the subject from the actual war, which is not going so well, not to mention the stumbling economy. Cultural issues are, of course, not just symbolic—gay rights and abortion rights have concrete, sometimes life-or-death significance for millions of people. But as George W. Bush and Karl Rove well know, they hold great symbolic value for the cultural right, and in the past such issues have helped distract Americans from their deepening credit card debt, rising healthcare costs and dwindling savings. Will that diversionary tactic work this time? Maybe not. Even some evangelicals are not convinced that a constitutional ban on gay marriage is a panacea for the country's ills.

The Democrats face their own balancing act, wanting to be the party of tolerance yet fearful of a backlash should they appear too committed to a "radical" gay agenda (the fact that marriage is hardly a radical goal rarely comes up). Kerry has repeated his opposition to gay marriage while voicing his support for all other rights for gay couples. This rather confusing position might reflect Americans' ambivalence better than Bush's declaration that gay marriage is "an issue that requires clarity" (i.e., discrimination enshrined in the Constitution), but it invites criticism from those on both sides of the debate.

Kerry—and the Democratic Party—are better off emphasizing their opposition to discrimination and turning up the volume on issues most voters can agree on: job creation, healthcare reform and changes in tax and trade policy to favor the non-rich. And just as Rove will use the gay marriage debate to energize the base for Bush, so the Democrats should use it to energize the millions who believe deeply in equal rights. By appealing to these voters, and to all who share their values on such cultural issues as choice, civil liberties and individual freedom, Democrats can take the high road—and take the White House.

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COMMENT

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Kerry's Challenge

ELECTION MATTERS

The John Kerry who won nine of ten Super Tuesday states, and with those victories Democratic nominee-in-waiting status, was not the John Kerry who officially launched his presidential campaign six months ago. Kerry underwent a campaign-season "extreme makeover" that transformed him from a tiresome noncontender who echoed the failed themes of the Democratic Party's disastrous 2002 campaign into a credible alternative to George W. Bush. It is this evolved John Kerry who has won twenty-seven of thirty Democratic primary and caucus contests. And while the fall campaign will turn on factors as diverse as unemployment figures and Osama bin Laden's fugitive status, the extent to which Kerry embraces and expands upon that evolution could be decisive in determining whether he beats Bush in November.

To get a sense of how radical the remake has been, consider the issue of trade. A pre-makeover Kerry appeared this past September before the Detroit Economic Club and declared himself "an entrepreneurial Democrat." He condemned Howard Dean and Dick Gephardt for advocating a "retreat from the global economy" because they were critical of free-trade agreements. Dean's pledge to insert environmental and labor standards into trade agreements "would mean we couldn't sell a single car anywhere in the world," Kerry griped. Five months later, with Dean and Gephardt out of the race, Kerry was sixty miles south of Detroit in Toledo, where he rallied Ohio primary voters with a pledge to "create a fair playing field for our trade relationships in the world" by launching a 120-day review of all trade agreements as part of a push to assert labor and environmental standards.

Kerry's changing colors have already provided fodder for charges that he's a hypocrite. Two days after Super Tuesday, the Bush camp fired round one of the TV advertising campaign that will be the public face of a $175 million re-election effort. Bush himself says that his campaign will seek at every turn to contrast Kerry's record with his campaign-trail promises. Kerry should get used to being called names. And he should recognize that whether his transformations on everything from trade policy to support for the Iraq war are condemned as hypocrisy or hailed as genuine growth, it is the evolved John Kerry that voters like; while exit polls pegged him as the favorite of the electability crowd, Kerry was by Super Tuesday pretty consistently winning among voters who ranked issues and ideology as higher priorities.

With the nomination fight winding down, Kerry will be pressured to devolve toward the cautious centrism that characterized the early, "going nowhere fast" stage of his campaign. The corporate Democratic Leadership Council and a horse race–obsessed Washington press corps will argue that he can't raise money or appeal to centrist voters unless he douses the populist fires. That's certainly what the Bush camp wants. Campaign czar Karl Rove would like nothing better than a challenge to Bush from the John Kerry who voted for the use-of-force resolution on Iraq, the Patriot Act, "No Child Left Behind" education reforms and fast-track authority to allow Bush to negotiate a sweeping Free Trade Area of the Americas agreement—rather than from the John Kerry who

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learned to savage those initiatives on the campaign trail. Bush benefited tremendously from 2000 debates in which he and Al Gore seemed to agree on a wide range of issues. Like Kerry, Gore evolved into a better candidate during his 2000 nomination fight with Bill Bradley. But as soon as he secured the nomination, he let his primary muscles go soft. If Kerry is smart, he'll learn from Gore's mistakes and remember that when he started evolving into a more aggressive and progressive candidate, he started winning. JOHN NICHOLS

Coup in Haiti

For those who know Haitian history, this has been a time of eerie, unhappy déjà vu. Part of the pain is to see the elected president coerced out of office by heavy-handed pressure from the United States and France, accompanied by a show of force and the threat of a blood bath. But to also hear that he's been spirited off to a secret location is to be bluntly reminded of the fate of the fabled leader of Haiti's revolution, former slave and stable boy Toussaint L'Ouverture, who was entrapped by the French, bound, and hustled away from Haiti on a ship, to die in solitary confinement in a fortress prison in the Jura mountains in France.

When Aristide descended from his plane in Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic, he made a brief statement: "In overthrowing me, they cut down the tree of peace, but it will grow again, because its roots are well planted." This was a deliberate allusion to Toussaint, who said, from aboard the ship, never to see Haiti again: "They have felled only the trunk of the tree. Branches will sprout again, for its roots are numerous and deep." The echo can be missed by no Haitian.

It's hard to justify contemporary comparisons to the founders of nations, especially when made not by a third party but by the leader himself. But in Bangui, Aristide was not so much comparing himself to Toussaint as he was making a connection between the French betrayal of Toussaint and the Americans' betrayal of his own presidency. Though the indications had been many, especially since George W. Bush came to power, Aristide had hesitated over the years—for reasons of political expedience—to come right out and say what was patently true.

But now he's saying it. What happened in Haiti was a coup d'état, and it's almost funny to hear Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Powell and Scott McClellan call that claim "absurd" and "nonsense." The coup didn't come in one fell strike, which fact camouflaged it for a time; we're used to a coup being a *coup*—which means a cut or blow in French—something sudden. But the coup against Aristide, and by extension against the Haitian people, was prolonged, a chronic coup. It began when Aristide was first elected at the end of 1990 and continued right up until he was hustled aboard a plane and flown to what he was told would be a place of his choice but that turned out to be the former homeland of fabled killer and diamond collector Jean-Bédel Bokassa, a country where, according to the CIA country report available on the web, a ten-year elected civilian government was recently replaced by a military coup d'état. Sound familiar?

One thing about coups: They don't just happen. In a country like Haiti, where the military has been disbanded for nearly a decade, soldiers don't simply emerge from the underbrush; they have to be reorganized, retrained and resupplied. And of course, for something to be organized, someone has to organize it. At the end of the 1700s when heroic fighters like Henry Christophe, Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Toussaint L'Ouverture joined forces to overthrow the French planters, they did it in a fashion quite similar to these latter-day brigands. Driving into one city after another with sabers drawn, burning and looting and seizing control, they took the north and then moved southward. Even then, with their scant means of communication, they planned it, they organized it. And they too had help from abroad—from the Americans, in fact.

In the current coup, there are several players. There is the disgruntled former Haitian army (an institution with a violent and unpalatable recent history), which has been wielded many times in the service of coups d'état, often subsidized by its masters, the elite of Haiti. The elite, too, had their hand in this coup—it's hard to believe in this day and age, but they must be called the entrenched class enemies of the Haitian people. There is "a growing enthusiasm among businessmen to use the rebels as a security force," said a news report from the *Los Angeles Times* after the remnants of the Haitian army that helped engineer the coup descended on the capital. "[The businessmen] welcomed the rebels."

You will notice in the next few weeks that the Haitian people, who have been featured so prominently in recent weeks—those crowds demonstrating, or those bands of opportunists looting and pillaging, those people cowering as shots ring out or sprawled across a pavement—will fade from the scene, because they have been used to their full extent by the masters of the coup. Now the reconstituted Haitian army in all its machismo will maraud through the slums eradicating pockets of support for the deposed leader. The Marines are there simply to do the sweep-up if they can, and if they dare, given the the rebels' boldness. Now, according to a formulation adopted when Aristide was still in power, the

CALVIN TRILLIN

GEORGE W. BUSH SPEAKS OUT ON GAY MARRIAGE

He backs an amendment defining the vow
Of marriage as being a guy and his frau,
Lest civilization sink into a slough—
Which he says could happen. It isn't clear how.

Though he can't explain it, he needn't expand.
We saw this with Poppy. We know what's at hand:
The Jesus battalions demanded this stand.
The yelp of the lap dog is heard in the land.

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COMMENT

international community will choose a committee, and the committee will select a "council of wise men," and those wise men will select a prime minister. Perhaps such steps will lead toward stability; without a leader, the Haitian people may be more easily convinced to accept the decisions of these committees and panels and unelected officials. But it's hard to imagine the foreign forces setting up a panel of elders while across the street, the new army's troops are burning artwork and shooting passers-by.

The groundwork for this coup was laid during the months when Aristide was first re-establishing his government. When the Clinton Administration reinstated Aristide, it too brought in the Marines, ostensibly for nation-building but also to make sure the reinstalled president didn't get up to any populist shenanigans: Clinton knew he was bringing Aristide back against the will of the Haitian elite, and the US President feared both another coup by the elite against Aristide, and then revenge by Aristide's supporters. So the Marines secured the transition back to Aristide and then remained for about a year and a half, during which time they did not disarm the Haitian army or the remainder of the Duvaliers' feared Tontons Macoutes. It was clear at the time that the Americans wanted to make sure there would be arms floating around that could be used against the Haitian government if need be.

One should be clear about the opposition in Haiti right now: although it includes some very good people, it is largely a group of malcontent career politicians, wealthy businessmen and ambitious power-seekers. It is exactly the kind of "civil society" opposition the United States encouraged and financed when it was attempting to remove Manuel Noriega in Panama. The Haitian opposition, too, was financed and organized during the Aristide years by US-funded groups like USAID's Democracy Enhancement Project and the International Republican Institute, an organization established in 1983 "to advance democracy worldwide." These have played a central and critical role in keeping an unpopular Haitian opposition alive and obstructionist. At every turn, the US-backed opposition tried to bring political life under Aristide to a halt.

It would be nice if Aristide were a saint. It's comfortable to take the side of a saint. But he isn't one. Many people died under his government who shouldn't have, and very few indeed are those who have been brought to justice for those crimes. But he didn't start out to be a brutal dictator: History and events and the international community and his own flawed character conspired against him. He does not deserve to suffer the same fate as Jean-Claude ("Baby Doc") Duvalier, who was also nudged out by the United States and replaced by a military-civilian junta.

When push came to shove this time around, the Bush Administration, which paid lip service to the continuation in office of the democratically elected president, refused to send in the Marines until the president was bundled off and safely stowed away in the heart of Africa, under virtual house arrest. It's not surprising, after this long, sad history, that there are people who believe Aristide when he says he was "kidnapped." He was kidnapped, in effect. So was his presidency, and so was Haiti's attempt at democracy.

AMY WILENTZ

Amy Wilentz is the author of The Rainy Season: Haiti Since Duvalier *(Touchstone) and of the novel* Martyrs' Crossing *(Ballantine).*

Greenspan's Con Job

It is not exactly that he lies, but Alan Greenspan certainly ranks among the most duplicitous figures to serve in modern American government. Using his exalted status as economic wizard, the Federal Reserve chairman regularly corrupts the political dialogue by sowing outrageously false impressions among gullible members of Congress and adoring financial reporters. These distortions are not harmless; they become solemn writ for lawmakers and opinionmongers. Greenspan is especially destructive when he opines on public matters outside his supposed expertise as a central banker. His thinking is still anchored by Ayn Rand's brittle social philosophy: Let the strong prevail, let the weak pay for their weakness.

The Fed chairman's recent remarks on Social Security and the federal budget deficits offer a particularly chilling example. In a House budget hearing, he elided the two subjects in a way that produced predictable scare headlines and chin-wagging editorials. The deficits must be dealt with promptly, he warned, because the baby boomers are about to retire. Then Social Security will be in trouble. And so government must cut benefits now, before it's too late. "I am just basically saying that we are overcommitted at this stage," he explained. "You don't have the resources to do it all."

That sounds like manly wisdom. Greenspan was widely praised for courage. He should more properly be pilloried for gross mendacity. He is proposing a con job on ordinary working Americans—a bait-and-switch game on a grand scale—in which the payroll taxes they paid into Social Security over many years will now be diverted to other purposes, including the generous tax reductions G.W. Bush has enacted for the very wealthy and the corporations. It doesn't sound so noble when you put it that way. Greenspan knows these facts but also knows his big lie will probably endure as conventional wisdom. Typically, the media shorthanded his comments to create a larger fallacy—that Social Security is part of the deficit problem, therefore future retirees deserve to take the hit.

Here is the truth: Social Security is not in deficit, not now and not for at least the next forty years. The trust fund will have a surplus next year of $1.8 trillion. In 2011 when, Greenspan warns, the baby boomers will start retiring in large numbers, the surplus will be $3.2 trillion. These stored savings, plus future payroll-tax revenue, are sufficient to pay all retirees the current level of benefits through 2042, according to the fund's very conservative actuaries.

The problem is, the government borrowed this money and has spent it on other projects. But the trust fund, despite what right-wingers like to claim, is not an accounting gimmick. The government is legally obligated to pay back the money (as surely as it is obliged to repay Treasury bonds). The borrowed trillions, in fiduciary terms, belong to the "beneficial owners"—every worker who has paid higher payroll taxes for the past twenty years.

Greenspan is familiar with the accounting because he was chairman of the bipartisan commission that supposedly "fixed" the Social Security problem back in 1983 by imposing a huge increase in FICA payroll taxes—extra revenue that produced the still-growing surpluses. This historic tax shift (I think of it as

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COMMENT

the "crime of '83") was most convenient to the Reagan Administration because Reaganomics had just created huge budget deficits by cutting income taxes for the monied interests and pumping up the military budget. The burgeoning surpluses from the Social Security payroll tax would help offset the economic impact of the deficits. Hardly anyone noticed at the time, since Democrats cooperated in the "solution." Now Bush Jr. has done the same thing. And Greenspan is proposing another "fix": Double-cross the workers who paid the extra trillions; don't disturb the new monster tax cuts delivered to the rich. Any con artist would appreciate the bait-and-switch as a nifty piece of work.

But the epic swindle may yet fail. Politicians, even the right-wing variety, hesitate to close the deal for fear the "marks"—workers, young and old—might figure it out. Meanwhile, there's one simple and just solution for any long-term fiscal problems Social Security might face: Eliminate the income cap of $87,000 on FICA taxes so that every highly paid worker, even Bill Gates, would pay the full freight. Since wealthy earners have benefited disproportionately from tax reduction, this would be their personal contribution to restoring fiscal order. Why doesn't someone ask the Fed chairman about that? If Democrats were more attentive to their constituencies, they would be aggressively promoting this reasonable alternative to Greenspan's sordid double talk, attacking him for duplicity and filing resolutions of impeachment. Did the Federal Reserve chairman knowingly deceive Congress and the public? What did the chairman know and when did he know it? Let the hearings begin. WILLIAM GREIDER

Britain's Secret Sharers

London

Barely a month ago Prime Minister Tony Blair looked unstoppable. He'd survived, narrowly, a revolt within his own party over plans to allow universities to charge higher tuition fees. The Hutton inquiry into the death of Dr. David Kelly, the British weapons expert, completely cleared Blair of the charge that his government had "sexed up" the case for war on Iraq or had been at all at fault in its treatment of Dr. Kelly. Yet it is only a slight exaggeration to say that today Blair is one leak away from resignation. Even if he holds on, questions raised recently will haunt him and any successor tempted to follow Blair's policy of shoulder-to-shoulder accommodation to US unilateralism.

Blair's basic difficulty is that the British public, who were extremely reluctant to wage war on Iraq in the first place, now have good reason to believe they were lied to about both the nature of the Iraqi threat and the legality of sending British troops—fifty-nine of whom have died—into combat. Lord Hutton's whitewash did Blair no good, for the simple reason that almost no one believed it. The government's credibility suffered a more serious blow when it decided not to prosecute Katharine Gun, the former British intelligence officer who blew the whistle on US efforts to fix last year's United Nations Security Council vote on Iraq. Gun admitted that she'd violated the Official Secrets Act when she leaked an e-mail asking for Britain's help in spying on the nonpermanent delegates to the Security Council but argued that her actions were justified by the "necessity" to prevent an illegal war. When her lawyers asked for Attorney General Peter Goldsmith's secret advice to the government on the legality of invading Iraq, the charges were suddenly dropped. The next day Clare Short, a member of Blair's war cabinet, revealed that Britain had also spied on UN Secretary General Kofi Annan—insuring that her charge that Goldsmith "had doubts" about the war's legality but "was leant upon" by the government would cause maximum damage.

Lord Goldsmith has already been forced to turn over the text of his advice to the parliamentary ombudsman, and it is hard to imagine that document remaining secret for much longer. The advice itself, essentially a lawyer's brief, may be ambiguous enough for Blair to explain away. But if the conclusions were changed between drafts at Blair's behest, he would probably have to resign.

The unanswered questions dogging the Prime Minister are: Did Downing Street put pressure on the Attorney General to rule that war against Iraq was legal without a second UN resolution—or even to reverse an earlier view that it was not? (British military leaders were reportedly demanding legal assurance only a few days before the war began.) Was Gun's prosecution stopped to prevent Goldsmith's doubts from coming to light? Is US and British spying on UN officials—weapons inspectors Hans Blix and Richard Butler have both come forward to say they were spied on as well—now standard procedure? And—the big question lurking behind all of the above—was the commitment of British troops in Iraq dictated not by Parliament or the intelligence services but by a deal sealed between Bush and Blair at their "war summit" at Camp David in September 2002?

D.D. GUTTENPLAN AND MARIA MARGARONIS

D.D. Guttenplan and Maria Margaronis write from The Nation*'s London bureau.*

NATION NOTES

We're happy to welcome to the masthead two contributing writers whose beats will include media, politics and in particular ideas and intellectual debates. Eyal Press, a former contributing editor at *Lingua Franca* who's written for *The Atlantic Monthly*, the *New York Times* and other publications, has been contributing to *The Nation* since 1994. A former fellow at the Open Society Institute and a recipient of the James Aronson Award for Social Justice Journalism, he's at work on a book chronicling the abortion wars in Buffalo. Scott Sherman comes to us from the *Columbia Journalism Review*, where he served as a contributing editor. Previously a contributing writer at *Lingua Franca*, he has written for such publications as the *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Village Voice* and *Dissent*. He has contributed to *The Nation* since 1997.

ON THE WEB: Katrina vanden Heuvel on ending the two-party duopoly, Robert Borosage on Rod Paige, Hillary Frey on Music for America and Marc Cooper on the California primary (www.thenation.com).

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Understanding the World With Paul Sweezy

I'm an optimist by disposition, but some weeks it's hard to find evidence of progress in human affairs. Here on the TV screen is Colin Powell, smoothly fulfilling his designated function as the Empire's prime dispenser of official lies. This particular morning he's ladling unctuous bilge about the US-sponsored coup in Haiti, even as the renascent Tontons Macoutes, under the tolerant gaze of USMC officers, swarm across Port-au-Prince, chopping up any supporters of Aristide they can find.

And here's John Kerry, the Democratic nomination in his grasp. Having made his own zestful contribution to the body count in Vietnam during the Phoenix sweeps, Kerry knows where many of the Empire's bodies are rotting. In his first Senate term he even led useful hearings into the BCCI scandal and the arms-for-cocaine shuttle in Central America. Then the Elders of Empire told him to mind his manners, which he promptly did.

But truth can pop out of Kerry's mouth from time to time, as happened amid the Haiti coup unrolling at the end of February under the carefully uncomprehending eyes of the US press. The Bush Administration, *Newsday* reported Kerry as saying, has "a theological and ideological hatred for Aristide," which led to the Administration empowering the rebels.

Not so bad. Then Kerry flew to Los Angeles (where the LAPD had just plugged more than ten bullets into a robber backing his car toward them) and called for 40,000 more troops, 100,000 more cops here at home, 100,000 more firemen. There's Keynesianism in action for you: John Kerry's bold pledge for job creation. He also pumped up California's AG, Bill Lockyer, to prod the state Supreme Court into banning San Francisco's same-sex marriage.

Democrats will spend the rest of the year insisting they're not liberal softies. So rest assured, Kerry says, "I will not hesitate to order direct military action when needed to capture and destroy terrorist groups and their leaders." The *Washington Post* noted that "Kerry appeared to outline his own preemptive doctrine in the speech." That's the presidential option this year: a choice between pre-emptive doctrines. Bill Blum, who's written a useful history of the National Endowment for Democracy, picked up on Kerry's attack on Bush in this same speech for providing insufficient funding for NED. As Bill wrote, "He probably thought he was on safe ground; the word 'democracy' always sells well. But this is his most depressing comment of all. He's calling for more money for an organization that was set up to be a front for the CIA, literally, and that for 20 years has been destabilizing governments, progressive movements, labor unions, and anyone else on Washington's hit list," including Haiti, where the NED has been active.

"When all seems dark," my father, Claud, used to say when I was a teenager, "try reading a little Marx. It puts things in perspective." As I'd mope over the defection of some girlfriend, he'd thrust a copy of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* into my hand and tell me to cheer up. I remembered Claud's advice last weekend, when news that one of the world's great Marxist economists, Paul Sweezy, had died at the age of 93.

Sweezy wasn't at all like Marx in demeanor. Karl was hairy, bohemian and cantankerous, whereas Paul, godlike in his good looks, radiated an amiable and dignified calm, at least in my personal experience. Reading Marx, you feel you're getting to the truth of the matter, and it was the same with Sweezy. He wrote and taught with extraordinary clarity.

After Sweezy's death, I asked Robert Pollin, once a student of Sweezy's, now teaching economics at UMass, for his thoughts. Bob remembered the excitement of Sweezy's lectures at the New School back in 1975, and he swiftly furnished many interesting paragraphs about Sweezy's great contributions in big books and in *Monthly Review*, which he founded with Leo Huberman in 1949.

At Harvard in the 1930s Sweezy was the star grad student of Joseph Schumpeter. Pollin reckons that Schumpeter was thinking of Sweezy, whom he greatly admired, when he wrote in *Capitalism, Socialism, Democracy* that capitalism would not survive because it breeds intellectual freedom, hence people with critical faculties, and it's only inevitable that these powerful minds will turn their guns on the deficiencies of capitalism itself. Then Schumpeter, himself a conservative, wrote that socialism would succeed, maybe unwieldily, but be more egalitarian nonetheless, in part because the brilliant thinkers grown dissatisfied with the crassness and injustices of capitalism would also rise to the top in a socialist society, and make it function decently. "And again," Bob writes, "who else could he have had in mind here but Paul, his student and protégé?"

Different times, brighter hopes. These days we're looking at a lot of socialist rubble, but simultaneously at capitalist architecture whose stresses and failures Sweezy—in accessible terms, decade after decade, in his books and in *Monthly Review*—trenchantly detected and explained: the reasons for the New Deal's failure, until World War II bailed out the system; military Keynesianism and the Korean War as the factors in US recovery; underdevelopment in the Third World, a consequence of dependency that was created by imperialism (an analysis evolved with Harry Magdoff in *MR*); the increasing role of finance in the operations of capitalism, an analysis, again evolved with Magdoff in *MR*, from the late 1960s on.

Way ahead of most, Sweezy was clear-eyed about the trends: the capture of more and more of society's wealth by the rich, the threat this tapering pyramid of purchasing power poses to the stability of the whole system, the need for the left to bolster what defenses working people can muster against the predators. Read his books and you can understand why we have Marines presiding over the continuing enslavement of Haiti, why we have John Kerry proclaiming his doctrine of progressive interventionism, why we have Alan Greenspan calling for a renewed onslaught on Social Security. Sweezy taught generations how to understand these things, how not to be surprised. Like all great teachers he gave us the consolations as well as the burden of such knowledge. If you know what's happening you're in a position to figure out how to do something about it, and that's always uplifting. ■

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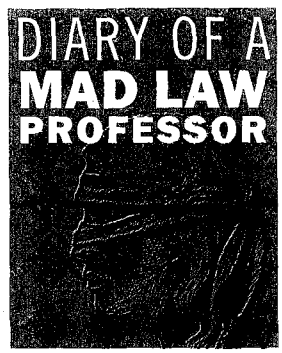
PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS

And the Winner Is...



While gaudily festooned Hollywood liberals presented each other with the false golden idol of a little naked man, enlightened others quietly celebrated the traditions of thousands of years of Western Civilization with the first annual Pre-emptive Theology of Bellicosity and Competitive Deficit Spending Awards. Here's the skinny:

Best Harangue in the Style of Father Coughlin went to Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, for its unequivocal rejection of no-fault doctrine, for its adherence to traditional family values of the Middle Ages and for its reinvigoration of flayed-muscular Christianity as X-treme sport.

Best Manifestation of the Glory of God went to... God, of course, for His all-knowing choice of Pat Robertson as His prophetic vehicle, and unto whom He has delivered glad tidings that George W. Bush will be swept back into office in 2004, despite the pesky trial-by-election posed by unholy French-looking pretenders to the throne of state.

The Nearer-My-God-to-Thee Award went to Rodger Findiesen, an American Airlines pilot who warned his passengers that non-Christians are "crazy." "You can use your time wisely on this flight or you can sit back and watch the movies," he said, urging believers to identify themselves and start converting the heathens in their midst. Panicked infidels rang relatives from cell phones, so great was their fear of the Good Word.

Best Gaffer went to Education Secretary Rod Paige for calling the National Education Association a "terrorist organization" because it has criticized aspects of George W. Bush's implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act. Although Paige later said he didn't really mean it, delighted prosecutors were said to be considering freezing the association's assets, and rumors swirled of teachers being shipped to Guantánamo Bay, where once and for all they might learn what's good for them.

Best Rendition of a Combat Zone was awarded to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger when he stated that the rush of gay marriages in San Francisco was not merely civil disobedience but a civil disturbance risking bloodshed. Although Schwarzenegger later said that gay marriage was "fine" with him, his terminology officially fell within the purview of the USA Patriot Act and potentially subjected civil disturbers to secret searches of their homes and bedrooms and closets and drawers and all the dark, moist, sordid little places where they might be plotting the overthrow of the domestic order.

Best Rendition of a Comfort Zone went to American Airlines for kicking off a plane four Carmelite nuns because other passengers complained of a sulfurous smell emanating from their vicinity.

Best Rendition of an Ethical Twilight Zone was won hands down by Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia for his acceptance of an invitation to go duck hunting with Vice President Dick Cheney, who is the subject of a suit recently accepted for review by the Court; and for Scalia's acceptance of free transportation on the vice presidential plane, Air Force Two; and for Scalia's acceptance speech itself, a concise yet artful performance in the looks-like-a-duck, sounds-like-a-duck, must-be-a-duck category: "Quack, quack."

We are still waiting for the results to be tallied in the category of Best Actor in an Oil Production. In fact, we are still waiting for the release of the names of the nominees. Our reporters are positioned outside the offices of Vice President Cheney, where, rumor has it, the merits are to be weighed, right after the ducks. Still waiting... Standing by...

Best Musical of the Chairs went to Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan for his proposal that funds from Social Security's cost of living adjustments should be used to help pay for the federal budget deficit, a plan that would have the edifying side effect of thwarting those godless, aging, long-haired, free-love, spend-and-tax baby boomers in their conspiracy to live well past their allotted time.

Best Make-Up was shared by France and the United States, which, having overlooked the human rights crisis in Haiti until it reached the boiling point, opted to "stabilize" that country by booting out its democratically elected president, collaborating with rebel leaders, including former members of Duvalier's infamous death squads, blocking the flow of desperate Haitians fleeing toward Florida and otherwise proclaiming their mutual interest in liberty, fraternity and equality.

A special American-as-Warm-Apple-Schnitzel award went to Senator Orrin Hatch for his proposed constitutional amendment dispensing with the requirement that presidential candidates be born in the USA, in favor of a twenty-year citizenship requirement, thus ordaining his friend Arnold Schwarzenegger as eligible for the job of leader of the new global outsourcing.

Best Thou-Shalt-Not-Kill Bill went to proponents of a House proposal that assaults on pregnant women be treated as two-person crimes, thus granting fetuses the status of personhood in the eyes of the law. Fetal personality would likely be the first step toward guardianship proceedings for fetuses, custody awards of fetuses and complicated questions of fetal detention under the USA Patriot Act, since even persons deemed innocent may be held indefinitely if the Pentagon sees risk in their release.

Best Moment in Homeland Security was awarded to the Senate, for its refusal to renew a ten-year ban on assault weapons or to require background checks on gun show customers.

The Better Than Best Moment in Homeland Security went to the chairman of the board of Smith and Wesson, a convicted robber who resigned from his post while the industry continues to press for Congressional reconsideration of a bill that would give gunmakers immunity from most forms of prosecution.

And top honors in the Life Is So Unfair category went to the Prada-clad college students who staged a campus protest against affirmative action in New York City, where close to half of all black men ages 16 to 65 are unemployed. ■

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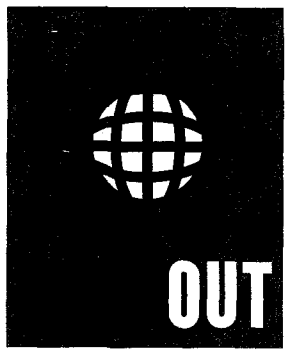
NAOMI KLEIN

Outsourcing the Friedman



Thomas Friedman hasn't been this worked up about free trade since the anti–World Trade Organization protests in Seattle. Back then, he told *New York Times* readers that the work environment in a Sri Lankan Victoria's Secret factory was so terrific "that, in terms of conditions, I would let my own daughters work" there.

He never did update readers on how the girls enjoyed their stint stitching undergarments, but Friedman has since moved on—now to the joys of call-center work in Bangalore. These jobs, he wrote on February 29, are giving young people "self-confidence, dignity and optimism"—and that's not just good for Indians, but for Americans as well. Why? Because happy workers paid to help US tourists locate the luggage they've lost on Delta flights are less inclined to strap on dynamite and blow up those same planes.

Confused? Friedman explains the connection: "Listening to these Indian young people, I had a déjà vu. Five months ago, I was in Ramallah, on the West Bank, talking to three young Palestinian men, also in their 20's.... They talked of having no hope, no jobs and no dignity, and they each nodded when one of them said they were all 'suicide bombers in waiting.'" From this he concludes that outsourcing fights terrorism: By moving "low-wage, low-prestige" jobs to "places like India or Pakistan...we make not only a more prosperous world, but a safer world for our own 20-year-olds."

Where to begin with such an argument? India has not been linked to a major international terrorist incident since the Air India bombing in 1985 (the suspected bombers were mostly Indian-born Canadian citizens). Neither is the 81 percent Hindu country an Al Qaeda hotbed; in fact, India has been named by the terrorist network as "an enemy of Islam." But never mind the details. In Friedmanworld, call centers are the front lines of World War III: The Fight for Modernity, bravely keeping brown-skinned young people out of the clutches of Hamas and Al Qaeda.

But are these jobs—many of which demand that workers disguise their nationality, adopt fake Midwestern accents and work all night—actually the self-esteem boosters Friedman claims? Not for Lubna Baloch, a Pakistani woman subcontracted to transcribe medical files dictated by doctors at the University of California San Francisco Medical Center. The hospital pays transcribers in the United States 18 cents a line, but Baloch was paid only one-sixth that. Even so, her US employer—a contractor's subcontractor's subcontractor—couldn't manage to make payroll, and Baloch claimed she was owed hundreds of dollars in back wages.

In October, frustrated that her boss wouldn't respond to her e-mails, Baloch contacted UCSF Medical Center and threatened to "expose all the voice files and patient records...on the Internet." She later retracted the threat, explaining, "I feel violated, helpless...the most unluckiest person in this world." So much for "self-confidence, dignity and optimism"—it seems that not all outsourced tech jobs are insurance against acts of desperation.

Friedman is right to acknowledge, finally, that there is a clear connection between fighting poverty and fighting terrorism (a step up from his usual practice of blaming suicide bombing on "collective madness"). He is wrong, of course, to argue that free-trade policies will alleviate that poverty: In fact, they are a highly efficient engine of dispossession, pushing small farmers off their land and laying off public-sector workers, making the need all the more desperate for those Victoria's Secret and Delta call center jobs.

But even if Friedman genuinely believes that low-wage export jobs are the key to economic development, holding them up as the cure for hopelessness in Ramallah verges on obscene. Every credible study on the economy in the occupied territories has concluded that the single greatest cause of Palestinian unemployment—now at over 50 percent—is the occupation itself. Israel's brutal system of sealing off Palestinian towns and villages—through checkpoints, roadblocks, curfews, fences and now the vile "security" wall—has "all but destroyed the Palestinian economy," states a September 2003 Amnesty International Report. "Closures and curfews have prevented Palestinians from reaching their places of work.... Factories and farms have been driven out of business."

In other words, economic development will not come to Palestine via call centers but through liberation. Friedman's argument is equally absurd when applied to the country where terrorism is rising most rapidly: Iraq. As in Palestine, Iraq is facing an unemployment crisis, one fueled by occupation. And no wonder: Paul Bremer's first move as chief US envoy was to lay off 400,000 soldiers and other state workers. His second was to fling open Iraq's borders to cheap imports, predictably putting hundreds of local companies out of business.

Laid-off workers looking to land a job rebuilding their shattered country were mostly out of luck: The reconstruction of Iraq is a vast job-creation program for Americans, with Halliburton et al. importing US workers not only as engineers but also as cooks, truck drivers and hairdressers. Second-tier jobs go to migrants from Asia, and Iraqis pick up the trash. It seems worth noting that John Kerry and John Edwards, while eager to condemn the loss of American jobs to "offshoring," have had nothing to say about this massive outsourcing of desperately needed Iraqi jobs by US corporations.

Yet these policies, maybe more than any others, have fueled the violence that now threatens to push Iraq into civil war. The men Bremer laid off are "the water tap that keeps the insurgency going. It's alternative employment," Iraqi entrepreneur Hussain Kubba told *Asia Times*. It's a view supported by Hassam Kadhim, a 27-year-old resident of Sadr City, who told the *New York Times* he is so desperate for work that "if someone comes with $50 and asks me to toss a grenade at the Americans, I'll do it with pleasure."

Friedman's bright idea of fighting terrorism with outsourced American jobs seems overly complicated. A better plan would be to end the occupation and stop sending American workers to steal Iraqi jobs. ■

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ARTICLES

YOU GOTTA LOVE HER

by TOM HAYDEN

I was digging into the batter's box one Saturday morning in San Pedro a couple of years ago when the catcher behind me muttered, "I'm a Vietnam vet, and I've been waiting for twenty years to say you should be dead or in jail for being a traitor." The umpire said nothing. I flied out to center. Later we talked. Then we became friends.

It turned out that his hatred was toward my ex-wife, not me, because he believed certain website fabrications about Jane Fonda that circulate among veterans. Twice the Republicans in the California legislature tried to block my seating because of my trips to Hanoi. But I was never a target of opportunity like my ex—more like collateral damage.

While most Americans, perhaps including that former Yale cheerleader and elusive National Guardsman George W. Bush and, I suspect, most Vietnam veterans, would like to forget the past, the Vietnam War is about to be relived this election season.

Senator John Kerry, a veteran of both the war and the antiwar movement, is causing this national Vietnam flashback. The right-wing attack dogs are on the hunt. Newt Gingrich calls Kerry an "antiwar Jane Fonda liberal," while Internet warriors post fabricated images of Kerry and Fonda at a 1971 antiwar rally. Welcome to dirty tricks in the age of Photoshop.

The attempted smearing of Kerry through the Fonda "connection" is a Republican attempt to suppress an honest reopening of our unfinished exploration of the Vietnam era.

Neoconservatives and the Pentagon have good reason to fear the return of the Vietnam Syndrome. The label intentionally suggests a disease, a weakening of the martial will, but the syndrome was actually a healthy American reaction to false White House promises of victory, the propping up of corrupt regimes, crony contracting and cover-ups of civilian casualties during the Vietnam War that are echoed today in the news from Baghdad. Young John Kerry's 1971 question—"How do you ask a man to be the last to die for a mistake?"—is more relevant than ever.

Rather than give these reopened wounds the serious treatment they deserve, the Republicans substitute the politics of scapegoating and sheer fantasy. Most centrist Democrats, in turn, try to distance themselves from controversies that recall the 1960s. There are journalistic centrists as well, who avoid hard truths for the sake of acceptance and legitimacy. Such amnesia, whether unconscious or not, lends a wide respectability to the feeble confessions of those like Robert McNamara, who took twenty-five years to admit that Vietnam was a "mistake" and then, when asked by filmmaker Errol Morris why he didn't speak out earlier, answered, "I don't

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want to go any further.... It just opens up more controversies."

The case of Jane Fonda reveals the double standards and hypocrisies afflicting our memories. In *Tour of Duty*, the Kerry historian Douglas Brinkley describes the 1971 winter soldier investigation, which Fonda supported and Kerry attended, where Vietnam veterans spilled their guts about "killing gooks for sport, sadistically torturing captured VC by cutting off ears and heads, raping women and burning villages." Brinkley then recounts how Kerry later told *Meet the Press* that "I committed the same kinds of atrocities as thousands of others," specifically taking responsibility for shooting in free-fire zones, search-and-destroy missions, and burning villages. Brinkley describes these testimonies in tepid and judicious terms, calling them "quite unsettling." By contrast, Brinkley condemns Fonda's 1972 visit to Hanoi as "unconscionable," without feeling any need for further explanation.

Why should American atrocities be merely unsettling, but a trip to Hanoi unconscionable?

In fact, Fonda was neither wrong nor unconscionable in what she said and did in North Vietnam. She told the *New York Times* in 1973, "I'm quite sure that there were incidents of torture...but the pilots who were saying it was the policy of the Vietnamese and that it was systematic, I believe that's a lie." Research by John Hubbell, as well as 1973 interviews with POWs, shows that Vietnamese behavior meeting any recognized definition of torture had ceased by 1969, three years before the Fonda visit. James Stockdale, the POW who emerged as Ross Perot's running mate in 1992, wrote that no more than 10 percent of the US pilots received at least 90 percent of the Vietnamese punishment, often for deliberate acts of resistance. Yet the legends of widespread, sinister Oriental torture have been accepted as fact by millions of Americans.

Erased from public memory is the fact that Fonda's purpose was to use her celebrity to put a spotlight on the possible bombing of Vietnam's system of dikes. Her charges were dismissed at the time by George H.W. Bush, then America's ambassador to the United Nations, who complained of a "carefully planned campaign by the North Vietnamese and their supporters to give worldwide circulation to this falsehood." But Fonda was right and Bush was lying, as revealed by the April–May 1972 White House transcripts of Richard Nixon talking to Henry Kissinger about "this shit-ass little country":

NIXON: We've got to be thinking in terms of an all-out bombing attack.... I'm thinking of the dikes.

KISSINGER: I agree with you.

NIXON: ...Will that drown people?

KISSINGER: About two hundred thousand people.

It was in order to try to avert this catastrophe that Fonda, whose popular "FTA" road show (either "Fun, Travel, Adventure" or "Fuck the Army") was blocked from access to military bases, gave interviews on Hanoi radio describing the human consequences of all-out bombing by B-52 pilots five miles above her. After her visit, the US bombing of the dike areas slowed down, "allowing the Vietnamese at last to repair damage and avert massive flooding," according to Mary Hershberger.

Tom Hayden, author of the forthcoming Street Wars *(New Press), teaches at Occidental and was a California state legislator for eighteen years. He was active in the antiwar movement with his ex-wife, Jane Fonda.*

The now legendary Fonda photo shows her with diminutive Vietnamese women examining an antiaircraft weapon, implying in the rightist imagination that she relished the thought of killing those American pilots innocently flying overhead. To deconstruct this image and what it has come to represent, it might be helpful to look further back in our history.

Imagine a nineteenth-century Jane Fonda visiting the Oglala Sioux in the Black Hills before the battle at Little Big Horn. Imagine her examining Crazy Horse's arrows or climbing upon Sitting Bull's horse. Such behavior by a well-known actress no doubt would have infuriated Gen. George Armstrong Custer, but what would the rest of us feel today?

In *Dances With Wolves*, Kevin Costner played an American soldier who went "native" and, as a result, was attacked and brutalized as a traitor by his own men. But we in the modern audience are supposed to respect and idealize the Costner "traitor," perhaps because his heroism assuages our historical guilt. Will it take another century for certain Americans to see the Fonda trip to Hanoi in a similar light?

The popular delusions about Fonda are a window into many other dangerous hallucinations that pass for historical memory in this country. Among the most difficult to contest are claims that antiwar activists persistently spit on returning Vietnam veterans. So universal is the consensus on "spitting" that I once gave up trying to refute it, although I had never heard of a single episode in a decade of antiwar experiences. Then came the startling historical research of a Vietnam veteran named Jerry Lembcke, who demonstrated in *The Spitting Image* (1998) that not a single case of such abuse had ever been convincingly documented. In fact, Lembcke's search of the local press throughout the Vietnam decade revealed no reports of spitting at all. It was a mythical projection by those who felt "spat-upon," Lembcke concluded, and meant politically to discredit future antiwar activism.

The Rambo movies not only popularized the spitting image but also the equally incredible claim that hundreds of American soldiers missing in action were being held by the Vietnamese Communists for unspecified purposes. John Kerry's most noted achievement in the Senate was gaining bipartisan support, including that of all the Senate's Vietnam veterans, for a report declaring the MIA legend unfounded, which led to normalized relations. Yet millions of Americans remain captives of this legend.

It will be easier, I am afraid, for those Americans to believe that Jane Fonda helped torture our POWs than to accept the testimony by American GIs that they sliced ears, burned hooches, raped women and poisoned Vietnam's children with deadly chemicals. Just two years ago many of the same people in Georgia voted out of office a Vietnam War triple-amputee, Senator Max Cleland, for being "soft on national defense."

If there is any cure for this mouth-foaming mass pathology in a democracy, it may lie at the heart of John Kerry's campaign for the presidency. Rather than distance ourselves from the past, as the centrist amnesiacs would counsel, perhaps we should finally peel back the scabs and take a closer look at why all the wounds haven't healed. The most meaningful experience of John Kerry's life was the time he spent fighting and killing in Vietnam and then turning around to protest the insanity of it all. Instead of wrapping himself in fabrications, he threw his fantasies and

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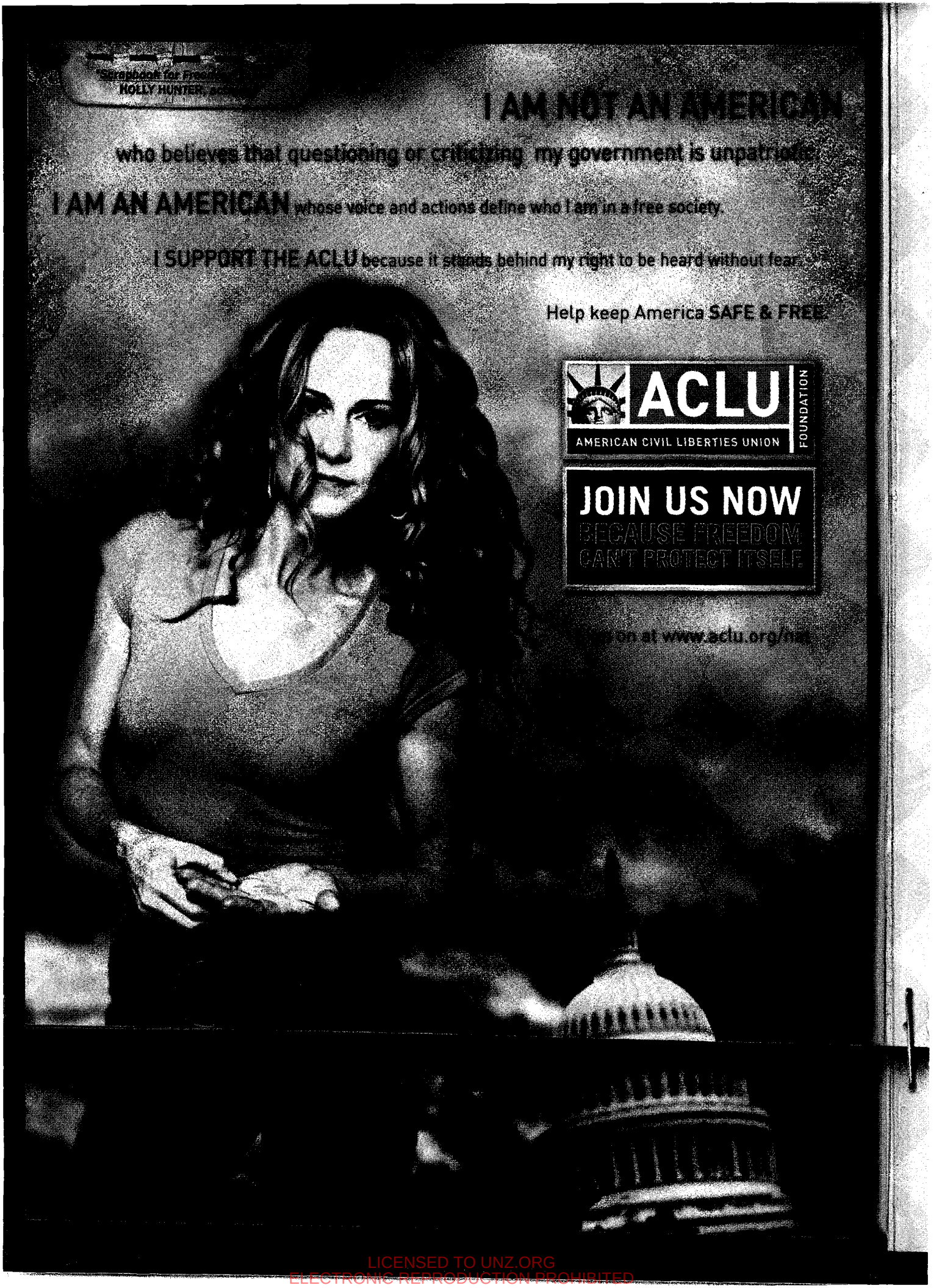
"Scrapbook for Freedom"
HOLLY HUNTER, actress
I AM NOT AN AMERICAN
who believes that questioning or criticizing my government is unpatriotic.
I AM AN AMERICAN whose voice and actions define who I am in a free society.
I SUPPORT THE ACLU because it stands behind my right to be heard without fear.
Help keep America SAFE & FREE.
ACLU
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delusions, and metaphorically his militarism, over the White House fence. That's what many more Americans need to do.

If I were George W. Bush, I would be terrorized by the eyes of those scruffy-looking veterans, the so-called band of brothers, volunteering for duty with the Kerry campaign. They look like men with scores to settle, with a palpable intolerance toward the types who sent them to war for a lie, then ignored their Agent Orange illness, cut their GI benefits, treated them like losers and still haven't explained what that war was about. They know Jane Fonda is a diversion from a larger battlefield. They are the sort who will keep a cerebral United States senator grounded, who have finally figured out who their real enemies are and who are determined that this generation hear their story anew. They are gearing up for one last battle. Chickenhawks better duck. ■

Why They Love to Hate Her

CAROL BURKE

Before going to bed at the US Naval Academy, a plebe shouts "Good night!" to the senior midshipman in the company, and the company commander answers "Good night!" in reply. A litany of good nights then passes down the chain of the company's command. At the end of this ritual courtesy, the plebe yells the final good night: "Good night, Jane Fonda!" and the entire company shouts its enthusiastic retort: "Good night, bitch!" Until that point, the performance has simply closed the day with a homage to hierarchy, with the lowest in the company, the plebe, showing deference to upperclass leaders. It reminds everyone of the rigid service academy structure, inherited from British boys' schools like Eton, in which upperclassmen dominate their juniors. The plebe plays the role of a child performing nightly valedictories to parents. But the final exchange, a unanimous curse of the former actress, former workout queen and former antiwar activist, serves quite a different end. The mock good night to Fonda reassures even the lowliest plebe of his insider status by expressing collective contempt for an outsider. According to an anonymous Naval Academy source, the ritual has been practiced by some but not all companies over the years, although in the past two years a few company officers have discouraged it.

But why Jane Fonda? Why not a more contemporary adversary? Naval Academy midshipmen weren't even born when Fonda spoke out against having US troops in Vietnam; many of them don't even know who she is until they are introduced to the mythic Jane at the academy. Soldier folklore during the Vietnam War and for several years afterward made fun of Ho Chi Minh, his "gooks" and the notorious VC, but those figures of ridicule stepped aside in the first Gulf War, to be replaced by Saddam Hussein and his fellow Iraqis ("ragheads" in the jokes, songs and stories), and most recently by the terrorist leader Osama bin Laden. All, that is, except Jane Fonda, who even as a grandmother in her mid-60s continues to attract a seemingly endless stream of abuse. More than thirty years after her trip to North Vietnam, veterans fill cyberspace with their resentment, and new recruits learn that being a real warrior and hating Jane Fonda are synonymous.

Along with fresh recruits, both commissioned and enlisted, in other branches of the military, naval officers-in-training learn that just as military identity prescribes adulation for heroic military figures, it also encourages ridicule of despised civilians. In their plebe year, freshmen make the dramatic transition from civilian to military status, from home to barracks. They leave a world in which mothers have played a large part in their lives and enter an institution that remains largely male in numbers and traditions, despite opening its doors to women in the late 1970s. The good-night ritual articulates the need to repudiate the life left behind and to embrace a martial future.

The Navy certainly has no monopoly on hatred of Jane Fonda; active-duty members and veterans of all the services freely express

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their disdain for the sex-kitten-turned-dressed-down-radical. Some of the more vitriolic veterans' websites provide forums in which contributors vent their anger toward the actress. As one vet writes, "Jane Fonda should have been shot, and will never be forgiven." Another man posting to a hate-Fonda website describes his disappointment when he went to see the film *Coming Home* and her character wasn't killed. They rail at "Hanoi Jane," belittle "Jane Fondle" and castigate her as a "pinko slut" who "appeared nude in movies, smoked pot, smuggled drugs, used profanity publicly, and now, worst of all, was aiding and abetting the enemy during wartime." Most recently, hate-Fonda sites have displayed Photoshopped images designed to undermine the campaign of John Kerry by presenting the two side by side (along with real photos showing them several rows apart at an antiwar rally).

In a 1988 interview with Barbara Walters, Fonda defended her opposition to the war but apologized to vets and their families for the "thoughtless" and "careless" things she might have said and done in her political enthusiasm. Referring to this apology, one vet states his anger simply, "I will forgive Jane Fonda when the Jews forgive Hitler." These sites sport bumper stickers with NUKE JANE FONDA and HANOI'D WITH JANE, along with the classic VIETNAM VETS ARE NOT FONDA JANE.

Internet critics also direct their hostility to Fonda in the form of virtual and real urinal targets. Some sites boast such targets available for download; others advertise them as stickers that can be purchased and affixed to public urinals. One of these targets features Fonda with legs lifted and spread apart (a promotional shot for one of her exercise videos). This image rests in the center of a bull's-eye. Superimposed over other images of the actress are cross-hairs, as if she were the sole enemy from an unfinished war. After explaining why he found Fonda's 1972 appearance in North Vietnam so repugnant, one vet recalled his pleasure at urinating on her face: "[The] only addition I might add to these sentiments is to remember the satisfaction of relieving myself into the urinal at some airbase or another where 'zaps' of Hanoi Jane's face had been applied." One urinal target reproduces the notorious 1972 photograph taken during Fonda's visit to North Vietnam: helmeted, smiling, seated at an antiaircraft gun (Fonda told *O, the Oprah Magazine* that she'd "go to my grave" regretting that photograph).

If the urinal targets offer the fantasy of retributive justice, fictionalized accounts of Fonda's 1972 visit with American POWs in North Vietnam charge her with conspiracy. In these word-of-mouth and Internet stories, which circulate widely among active-duty soldiers and veterans, the punishment inflicted on uncooperative POWs is linked to Fonda's presence. An oft-told variant of the torture legend depicts a single prisoner (generally considered to be POW Jerry Driscoll) who is forced to meet with Fonda and registers his defiance by spitting on the star:

> Dragged from a stinking cesspit of a cell, cleaned, fed, and dressed in clean PJs, he was ordered to describe for a visiting American "Peace Activist" the "lenient and humane treatment" he'd received. He spat at Ms. Fonda, was clubbed and dragged away. During the subsequent beating, he fell forward upon the camp Commandant's feet, which sent that officer berserk. In 1978, the AF Col. still suffered from double vision (which permanently ended his flying days) from the Vietnamese Col.'s frenzied application of a wooden baton.

This story is pure fiction (see links for this and the following excerpts at www.thenation.com). The prisoners to whom it is attributed, although no fans of Fonda, have flatly denied that it happened. The most popular of all these legends is by far the most dramatic. As recounted on another anti-Fonda site:

> He [Larry Carrigan] spent 6 years in the "Hilton"—the first three of which he was "missing in action." His wife lived on faith that he was still alive. His group, too, got the cleaned/fed/clothed routine in preparation for a "peace delegation" visit. They, however, had time and devised a plan to get word to the world that they still survived. Each man secreted a tiny piece of paper, with his [social security number] on it, in the palm of his hand. When paraded before Ms. Fonda and a cameraman, she walked the line, shaking each man's hand and asking little encouraging snippets like: "Aren't you sorry you bombed babies?" and "Are you grateful for the humane treatment from your benevolent captors?"
>
> Believing this HAD to be an act, they each palmed her their sliver of paper. She took them all without missing a beat. At the end of the line and once the camera stopped rolling, to the shocked disbelief of the POWs, she turned to the officer in charge...and handed him the little pile of papers. Three men died from the subsequent beatings. Col Carrigan was almost number four.

Such stories travel from vet to vet and soldier to soldier by word of mouth, across the back fence into the cyber fields, and even into print. One popular biography of Fonda recounts them as claims to be taken seriously, as do the *Washington Times* and William F. Buckley Jr., in a syndicated November 1999 article.

Vietnam POWs have tried to debunk the stories falsely attributed to them. Mike McGrath, the president of NAM-POWs and a prisoner from 1967 to 1973, has denounced them. Speaking for specific POWs named in the stories, McGrath has tried to set the record straight:

> They had nothing to do with the article attributed to them. They ask that we get their names off that bunch of crap. Tonight I talked with Larry Carrigan. He asked that we get his name off all that crap as well. He never left a room to talk to anyone like that. No torture or beatings to see Fonda. He was living with Bud Day, John McCain and a bunch of hard-nosed resisters during the Fonda visit...lots of witnesses if you want to question him (or them). Larry was never near Jane. There were never any POWs killed on account of Jane. (Did anyone ever provide a name of one of these tortured fellows?) That story about the notes has a nice theatric touch, but no such thing ever happened. The only ones who met with Jane willingly, to my knowledge, were CDR Gene Wilber and LCOL Ed Miller. One NAM-POW was forced to go before the Fonda delegation. And I think that was only to sit at a table for a photo opportunity. I doubt he ever got a chance to talk to her, let alone slip her a note. To my knowledge, the worst that happened to the rest of us was that we had to listen to the camp radio (Radio Hanoi and Hanoi Hannah) with the Fonda propaganda. It pissed us off, but I doubt you can call that "torture." So, if you get a chance to SHUT THIS STORY DOWN to the groups who are forwarding it, PLEASE DO SO.

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Despite the efforts of McGrath and others to stanch the flow of such legends, they continue to circulate, because they satisfy their tellers and audience as a protest against one of the most outspoken critics of the military. But Fonda is not just any antiwar activist; she is a civilian woman—"civilian" and "woman" being terms that in military culture tend to collapse into each other.

For the Vietnam War soldier, more than for his counterparts in any previous war, the lines between civilian and military became increasingly ambiguous. The Vietnamese who appeared one day as harmless civilians (women, children and the elderly) might on another day behave as agents of the enemy. Soldier songs, chants, jokes and stories gave voice to the soldiers' fear of a civilian population capable of transforming itself into the dreaded enemy. A version of that uncanny transformation took place stateside as well. Civilians at home, who in past wars had shown steadfast support and offered a grateful welcome to the returning soldier, became increasingly outspoken in protesting the war America had sent its soldiers to wage. These protesters grew loud in their denunciation of napalm and carpet bombing, which targeted civilians, they claimed, rather than enemy troops. They called soldiers "baby killers" and chanted, "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?" At the end of their tour, soldiers often returned to condemnation rather than congratulations.

Soldiers who condemned Fonda saw in her the American female uncannily, as if by sabotoge, transformed into an enemy agent.

The military has traditionally done an effective job of transforming the fresh recruit into a government-issue soldier capable of executing violence on command. By contrast, it has done very little to reverse the process and return the soldier to civilian life. Historically, the civilian population has assumed that role by ceremoniously welcoming home its soldiers with an acknowledgment of their suffering, thereby absolving the individual soldier of personal responsibility for acts performed in the name of the nation. When the civilian population refuses to accept this burden, it falls heavily on each soldier to handle it as best he can. Thus we saw a proliferation of "rap groups," group therapy sessions in which vets sought the confidence of fellow participants, fellow sufferers, after the Vietnam War.

In a war that featured few heroes, prisoners of war, whose sacrifice could not be challenged, enjoyed a special status. So it is not surprising that it was stories of POWs and their fictional encounters with Jane Fonda that enjoyed such a long life and such wide circulation among members of the military. Those stories rebuke the civilian who inflicts greater pain on the war's unambiguous victims. In a war in which the enemy was not clearly defined, it sometimes seemed to the unappreciated soldier that the real enemies might be back home. And in an important sense, Vietnam was a war of America against itself.

The choice of Jane Fonda as the woman soldiers love to hate didn't arise solely from her highly publicized antiwar stance. Other American women were just as active in the antiwar movement. Denise Levertov, like Fonda, made a trip to North Vietnam to protest the war, and Joan Baez was every bit as much a staunch critic as Fonda. No, Fonda engendered such anger in part because she had once stood for the girl every soldier had known at home. Vietnam-era soldiers had come to know her first as the cute ingenue of *Tall Story* and as the daughter of a famous and admired Hollywood star and then as the sex kitten Barbarella, always ready and willing to please. Within three years of playing Barbarella, Fonda was appearing regularly in prime-time news clips condemning US involvement in Vietnam. She and other actors and writers (Donald Sutherland, Dick Gregory and Fred Gardner among them) performed in shows that satirized the military and its role in Vietnam in coffeehouses near US bases. They intended their traveling review to be an antidote to the performances of entertainers who traveled from base to base to lend their support to the troops.

Those who condemned Fonda were not just disturbed by her efforts to win the hearts and minds of US servicemen through these performances and through her longtime support for Vietnam Veterans Against the War; nor was it her support for the North Vietnamese propaganda campaign that made them so angry. They saw in Fonda the American female uncannily, as if by sabotage, transformed into an enemy agent. The figure of a woman who appears to be one thing but turns out to be something more sinister or monstrous inhabits centuries of folklore. She makes her way into soldier lore as the apparently innocent but seductive foreign woman who turns out to be extremely menacing—for example, in the legends of pretty and inviting Vietnamese women who secretly laced their vaginas with broken glass, fishhooks or barbed wire in order to castrate GIs. While touring North Vietnam, Fonda attended performances of theater and dance, spoke with "the blushing militia girls," retreated to a bomb shelter when the shells began to drop and voiced her strong opposition to the war on North Vietnamese radio. The ever available, playful Barbarella had become the American soldier's nightmare—Hanoi Jane.

The Jane Fonda stories, the urinal targets and even the goodnight ritual at the Naval Academy function in military culture to stabilize and punish the dangerous female. Fonda is seen as the ultimate shapeshifter, a woman who has remade herself many times over, as ingenue, sex kitten, antiwar activist, exercise queen, wife of Ted Turner and born-again Baptist. In the face of this fluid civilian female, the military traditionally promises a one-way transformation from civilian to soldier, from boy to man, a process intended to fix a new identity, one that will travel with the soldier long after he has left active service. During the rapid troop rotations, massive antiwar demonstrations and challenges to traditional gender roles that characterized the period of the Vietnam War, when a majority of soldiers didn't see combat, the military failed to make good on its promise of transformation for many who served. As a result, they found themselves neither the innocents they were before going off to war nor the respected warriors their fathers had become when they returned from World War II.

For Fonda, there is no amount of self-transformation she can undertake that will save her from being cast in legend as the figure of the seductive woman who turns out to be a snake. It's the oldest story in the world. ■

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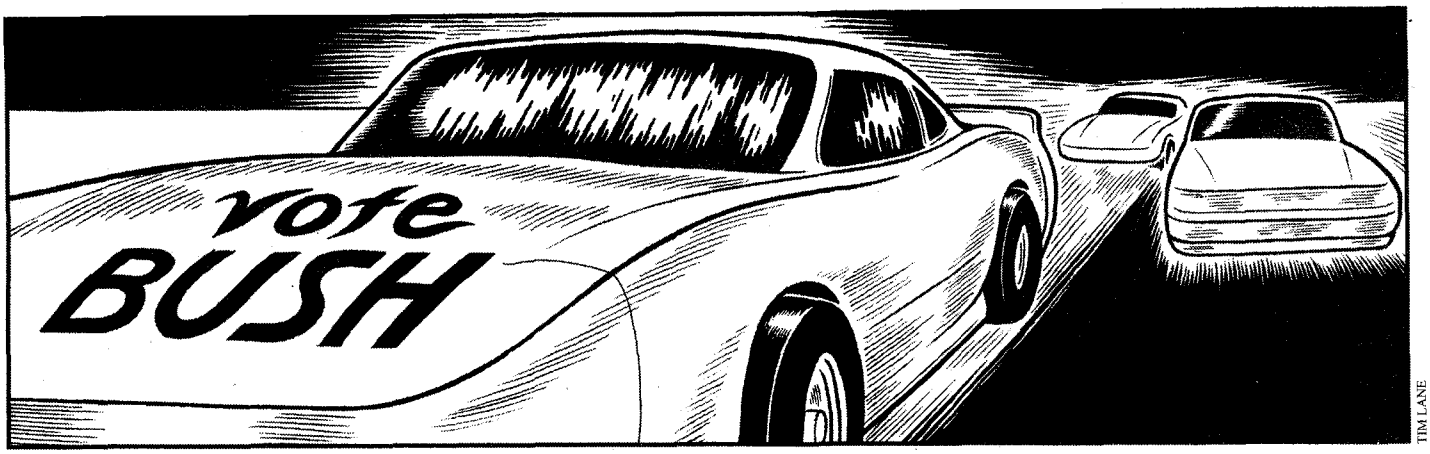

TIM LANE

Florida...Again?

MARC COOPER

Miami

When union activist Fred Frost was helping to painstakingly count hanging and dimpled chads under the glare of TV cameras in Palm Beach and Broward counties during those tumultuous thirty-seven days in the fall of 2000, he remembers clearly muttering to himself at one point, "I don't ever want to have to do this again in my life."

He made a decision right there and then to do something about it. Already a political rep for a local baggage handlers union, he decided that Step One was to run for President of the Southern Florida AFL-CIO. Four years later, now 48 and having already achieved that first goal—twice, to be exact—he's embarked on Step Two: to do everything in his power and that of his 150,000 members to defeat George W. Bush—and by a whole lot more than a contested 537 votes.

As staffers bustle around outside his office, rushing to get out the federation's first round of targeted political mailers (six months earlier than usual), Frost brims with confidence. President Bush has had a pleasingly lousy month, battered in the polls by missing WMDs, missing National Guard records and missing jobs. "I'm more optimistic as each day goes by," Frost says, slapping his desk. "I've never felt so much enthusiasm coming from the unions." And not just from the unions. Liberal and progressive activists, civil rights groups and community organizers are eagerly girding for yet another Battle Royal in Florida this November. "This is going to be a fierce, fierce fight," says former Democratic state chair Bob Poe, "just like it was in 2000."

Florida remains, by all accounts, the most evenly divided state in a deeply polarized America. "Florida is 40/40—40 percent Democratic, 40 percent Republican, with that 20 percent swing vote in the middle, and most of that in the middle of the state just full of registered Independents and ticket-splitters," says Congressman Alcee Hastings, who describes his home state as the New Peoria. "We now so closely mirror America that national marketers use our central corridor for consumer testing. In November it's going to come down again to every single vote."

With its trove of twenty-seven electoral votes (a full 10 percent of the total needed for the White House) and governed by the President's brother, who passionately wants to deliver, yet the Southern state where Democrats have the best chance to win, Florida is regarded by partisans on both sides as likely once again to be the hardest-fought among the fifteen or so battleground or swing states. Here we go again.

Progressives and liberal Democrats are remarkably upbeat in predicting victory, despite having been trounced two years ago in Jeb Bush's re-election campaign. The statewide March 9 primary, in fact, is passing with little notice, as most attention is riveted on November. "We have nothing to fear except our own failure to follow through on everything we say we are going to do," says Mark Neimeiser, political director of AFSCME, the public employees union. "This ain't no dress rehearsal."

It's not just bravado, wishful thinking and the lust to avenge Hurricane Chad that the Florida Democrats are counting on. There's also demographics. Beyond the traditional massive and liberal seniors vote in the southern tier of the state and the fiercely loyal and active African-American vote, which has significantly grown as an overall portion of the state vote, Florida, in general, is rapidly becoming more urban and more ethnic, moderating its Southern traditions. Waves of transplants from liberal urban centers around America (settling mostly in the swing central portion of the state), and new migrations of non-Cuban Latinos (most notably Puerto Ricans who, as US citizens, can vote), all make Florida increasingly fertile territory for Democrats.

In the ill-starred 2000 election, for example, Orange County—home to Orlando's theme parks and once the wellspring of Florida Republicanism—fell to the Democrats, nudged into the blue column by the budding Puerto Rican vote. "This trend is consistently in our direction, says Fort Lauderdale Congressman Peter

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Among the NASCAR Dads

Daytona Beach

As George W. Bush popped into the International Speedway during the granddaddy NASCAR Daytona 500 on February 15 he was careful to not screw up the way Bill Clinton did back in 1992. During his first presidential campaign Clinton was met with a wall of hoots and boos when he tried to make a political speech at a Darlington Raceway NASCAR run.

Bush wisely opted instead for the more visceral politics of cultural imagery. First he buzzed the gathered 180,000 stock-car-racing fans with Air Force One and two streaking F-15s. "The President is cool," said 38-year-old Gainesville carpenter Jim Reiter, who was sitting next to me as he watched the impromptu air show and sipped a brewski. Reiter apparently picked that phrase up from top NASCAR driver Dale Earnhart Jr., who has repeatedly and publicly made the same observation of Dubya.

A few minutes later, Bush tickled the crowd by running a lap around the legendary 2.5-mile track in his blacked-out motorcade fleet of spiffy SUVs. After a rousing live rendition of "God Bless the USA" from country singer Lee Greenwood, the crowd was stoked again by yet another overflight—this time from a wedge-shaped B-2 bomber flanked by fighter escorts.

Then Bush materialized simultaneously on the speedway stage and on an array of super-sized TV monitors and, dressed in a dark NASCAR windbreaker, carefully limited his words. "Laura and I are honored to be here," he said. "We ask God's blessing." And then after a dramatic pause, he commanded, "Gentlemen, start your engines!"

That elicited a thunderous, bone-rattling roar from nearly four dozen 700-horsepower V-8s, which in a cloud of Sunoco fumes brought the entire crowd to its feet, cheering, stomping and waving thousands of Budweiser cans high into the air.

Whether this hops-driven homage was to the President in front of us or to the awesome machinery below us, it mattered not. Mission accomplished either way. The whole idea of this thinly disguised campaign stop was to burnish the Everyman cultural pose that Bush has so successfully honed, and this was a ripe audience.

It was, after all, the biggest known gathering in one place of what some say is this election cycle's hot new key constituency: NASCAR Dads. Democratic pollster Celinda Lake, who coined the term in 2002, defines the group as "blue-collar fathers between 35 and 55...culturally conservative but very populist." In other words, what in the 1980s we used to call Reagan Democrats and back in the political Pleistocene era Joe Six-Packs.

Anywhere else in the world these folks would simply be called the working class and their political loyalty would overwhelmingly be with our version of a labor party. But this is America, and things get a lot more complicated. NASCAR marks the treacherous intersection where culture and class crash head-on. There's no doubt that thousands of those sitting around me spend plenty of nights at the kitchen table worrying over healthcare and jobs. But today they're loudly applauding driver Bobby Labonte as he rolls out his grumbling green Interstate Batteries Chevrolet, its specially painted hood promoting Mel Gibson's just-released *The Passion of the Christ*.

Some say the race for the NASCAR Dad vote is overblown. "I think it's something Karl Rove conjured up," says Florida Democratic Representative Alcee Hastings with a laugh. "One in five fans are now a minority. Almost half are women. They're no different than anyone else." Once a Southern regional sport defined as stretching from Darlington to Daytona, from Atlanta to Austin, NASCAR has burgeoned into a national craze, attracting 75 million fans coast to coast. An average Fox racing broadcast draws twice the audience of a network-carried NBA game.

As a result, NASCAR is on a mainstreaming fast track. The privately held company (whose new CEO boasts "I'm a registered Democrat") has jettisoned its longtime sponsorship by R.J. Reynolds in favor of Nextel—a cell phone in your pocket now a more attractive status symbol than a pack of Winstons. Vociferous Democrats Ben Affleck and Whoopi Goldberg were shipped into Daytona to serve as Grand Marshal and Honorary Starter, and no one seemed to mind. NASCAR is also sponsoring its own diversity program, quickly trying to bring some African-Americans into what is still an all-white crew of top-rated drivers. After all, in a sport that has become such an all-out corporate marketing bonanza, why exclude any potential commercial constituency?

After the seventh lap (out of a total 200), when the Viagra-sponsored car was the first to peter out, I took a pedestrian cruise through the jumble of officially sanctioned booths and stands around the track perimeter. The GOP voter reg booth was hardly swamped, but it was doing better business than the US Army recruitment tent across the way—nowadays it being safer to be one of Bush's voters rather than one of his soldiers.

But it was the NASCAR Official Merchandise tent that really packed them in. "Sure I applauded Bush. He's our President," said Mike Vanisch, a 41-year-old unionized electrician from Fort Lauderdale who was pondering a $110 satin red Budweiser jacket. "But I'm not voting for him. Too many people I know have seen their jobs go to Mexico in the last couple of years."

It's doubtful this was the prevailing sentiment at the track. Bush did pick up nearly 70 percent of the Southern white male vote in 2000. But precisely because of vanishing manufacturing jobs and a war that seems to be draining the national treasury, Democrats think they can bite into the NASCAR vote this fall.

Both John Kerry and John Edwards have loudly proclaimed themselves NASCAR fans. They surely have read how, during his 2001 gubernatorial race, Virginia Democrat Mark Warner helped sponsor a NASCAR team and then took his seat with a 100,000-vote margin. Retiring Florida Senator Bob Graham sponsored a mean-looking Ford pickup emblazoned with "Bob Graham for President" before he dropped out of the White House race late last year.

NASCAR driver Brian Weber of Charlotte, North Carolina, spent time at the beginning of the year campaigning with Howard Dean and was hoping to race his Number 84 Chevrolet in the Daytona 500 as the official Team Dean entry. But just as he was getting ready to paint his car, the wheels came off the mother campaign and Weber couldn't raise enough money to go ahead. Weber was last rumored to be mulling over a Kerry Kar. M.C.

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Deutsch, one of the three leading Democrats seeking to replace retiring Senator Bob Graham. "We've won statewide three out of the four cycles," says Deutsch. "We certainly should do it again."

Formidable Republicans

Outside observers, however, counsel caution. "The Republican Party here is extremely disciplined and organized," says Mark Silva, political editor of the *Orlando Sentinel*. "No one should underestimate the real organization that Jeb Bush commands." Electoral math renders Florida a state the GOP can't afford to lose. "Look at the three big states: California, Texas and Florida," says Jim Krog, a former Democratic strategist who managed the two successful gubernatorial campaigns of the late Lawton Chiles. "Some Democrats think, wrongly, that they can win nationally and skip Florida, like Clinton did in '92 when they didn't put a dime in this state. But Republicans know they have to win two out of three of those states. Texas is one. California they can forget about. That leaves Florida as a must-win."

Consequently, the Bush-Cheney campaign is tightly targeting Florida and vows to have 2,500 paid and volunteer organizers and canvassers soon working on the ground, and twenty times that number by Election Day. Mimicking Big Labor's get-out-the-vote campaigns, the GOP aims to register tens of thousands of new Florida voters and is currently strip-mining the mailing lists of conservative interest groups, from the NRA to evangelical churches. And like the Democrats, the Republicans are already running six months ahead of the usual general election schedule. "The Republicans are just as serious in wanting to re-elect George W. Bush as those who oppose him are intent on getting rid of him," says Sharon Lettman-Pacheco, state director of America Votes, an umbrella group for two dozen progressive organizations. "I know they are sleeping in shifts if they are sleeping at all. They want it all, and they want it by any means necessary."

The state Republicans are also acutely aware of the shifts in Florida's electorate. Yes, they are likely to campaign on hot-button cultural wedge issues from guns to gay marriage, but "they're also going to try a run down the center," says former education commissioner Betty Castor, another Democratic contender for the open US Senate seat. "Jeb Bush really wants to deliver this state for his brother, so they are going to be touting jobs, the environment and education, basically trying to steal our Democratic issues." Nor should anyone overestimate the speed of shifting attitudes. Florida is the second-highest state in terms of National Guard members mobilized in Iraq. "Make no mistake. That still plays in the President's favor," says a Tallahassee political consultant.

Democratic activists say they expect little help in their efforts this year from the Florida Democratic establishment. The state party is disorganized and dispersed, often described by observers as rag-tag. "You can be sure the Democrats will be late, underfunded and lacking a strong center," predicts Krog.

Party insiders disagree. They point to a rambunctious state party convention two months ago that drew a record 5,000 delegates and activists and tout the election of a new and energetic party chairman, Scott Maddox. "We're angry and we are organized—better organized than ever before," says Broward County party power broker Amadeo "Trinchi" Trinchitella. "This time the party is not going to take one vote for granted."

Whatever the case, no one doubts that it's the grassroots that will do the heavy lifting this year, just as it did in 2000, when it produced a stunning turnout for Al Gore. "No one thought we could win and no one wanted to help," says Monica Russo, the fiery president of Florida Service Employees International Union Local 1199. "But what we pulled off, frankly, was incredible, almost a miracle." Lettman-Pacheco, who helped lead the aggressive get-out-the-vote effort, says, "Outsiders don't give enough credit to Florida for the 2000 turnout. The problem was the process, not the turnout. We, here, in fact, did everything extremely well."

2000: Arrive With Five

The movement-style politics in 2000 was inadvertently unleashed by Governor Jeb Bush when, in late 1999, he issued an executive order dismantling affirmative action programs in state education. Reacting to this "One Florida" measure, then–state legislators Tony Hill and Kendrick Meek (whose mother, Carrie Meek, was the first black Florida congresswoman) staged an overnight sit-in at the governor's Miami office. This dramatic move galvanized a bottom-up opposition movement that included Russo's SEIU, other progressive unions, civil rights groups, and numerous other black politicians. In March 2000, tens of thousands of angry protesters marched on Tallahassee urging, "Remember in November!"

The new ground-level coalition then came up with a voter mobilization strategy dubbed Arrive With Five—a pledge not only to show up at the polls but also to bring a handful of other voters in tow. As Meek, Hill, Russo and others led this campaign doggedly across the state and into more than thirty counties, the national Democrats and the Gore campaign remained on the margin. "But our strategy worked," says Russo. On the day after the November election the *Miami Herald* credited the Arrive With Five push with producing an "astounding" black voter turnout that included 88 percent of Miami Dade County's registered African-American voters. Statewide black turnout hit 73 percent (compared with 70 percent overall). And the black vote—which was more than 90 percent Democratic—zoomed from 10 percent of total votes cast in 1996 to 16 percent. In the end, the GOP squeaked by thanks only to five votes from the Supreme Court.

Two years later, however, with voter anger over the butterfly ballots and the dimpled chads still fresh, the Democratic Party failed to capitalize on its own grassroots in the governor's race. Eschewing the candidacy of former Attorney General Janet Reno—who enjoyed near superstar status among the Democrats' liberal base—the party opted instead for a little-known newcomer, Bill McBride. The Democrats fueled his campaign with a $15 million jolt in the closing weeks (mostly from the national party), but later analyses suggested it had spent too much money on ineffective TV ads and not nearly enough on door-to-door contact with the voter base. Black turnout collapsed to a mere 43 percent, and Jeb Bush buried McBride in an embarrassing landslide. Yet in that very same election, highlighting the gulf between the party and its base, the same progressive coalition fashioned two years before sponsored and won a statewide ballot proposition that wrote classroom size reduction into the state Constitution—a measure bitterly fought by Jeb Bush.

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2004: The Sanctified Seven

All of which brings us back to this coming November. On March 7, the same progressive coalition of unions, civil rights groups and black politicians—led again by Kendrick Meek—was to formally kick off the 2004 anti-Bush push, trying to reprise the march on Tallahassee. Meek is now a US Congressman and also serves as chief of John Kerry's Florida campaign.

But the Democratic establishment still seems AWOL. "I haven't heard anything yet from the Democratic Party," says Bishop Victor Curry, pastor of the New Birth Baptist Church and former head of the Miami NAACP. One of the more outspoken leaders during the 2000 vote-count confrontation, Curry is already criss-crossing the state, meeting with scores of black clergy and enrolling them in the new voter mobilization program he calls the Sanctified Seven—a pledge to bring yourself and a half-dozen others out to vote. "I have heard from the unions, from the People for the American Way, from the NAACP and others," says Bishop Curry. So regardless of what the Democratic Party does, he says, "we're all gearing up to vote against Bush."

That sort of energy and optimism is infectious. Canvassers are already walking precincts, phone banks are already buzzing. "This is really the first time there's an early plan," says Cynthia Hall, leader of the Florida state labor federation. "What usually happens in September or October is beginning to happen now. We've divided up the state into five zones and already have staff operating in each one." Still, Florida is a "right to work" state, and with only about 7 percent of the work force members of unions (about half the national average), labor is relatively weak. "Labor can't do jack shit on its own," admits a prominent statewide union leader. "We need help. A lot of help."

Some of the assistance might come from a passel of supposedly independent satellite fundraising and voter turnout groups busily moving into the state. Called 527s after the section of the IRS code that regulates them, these committees—mostly with Democratic ties—can raise unlimited amounts of money and then spend it on voter "education" and registration as long as they don't endorse a specific candidate. Established to circumvent the soft-money restrictions of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law, and having already received funding from labor, environmental and women's groups (and a generous handout from billionaire George Soros), the 527 committees aim to be important—if unofficial—allies of the Democrats this year.

One of the more prominent 527s, America Coming Together, founded by former AFL-CIO political director Steve Rosenthal, has already set up shop in Florida. Its rented storefront space in Orlando pulsated with activity as the first batch of canvassers pored over their "walking maps" downloaded onto Palm Pilots. "What works best is old-fashioned face-to-face contact," says ACT's Florida director Karin Johanson. "I know from my Washington experience just how far we have drifted from that principle. This is a return to our roots."

Local activists are grateful for the 527 support, but some are also concerned about just how useful these outside groups will prove to be. "This is still the South, you know," says a prominent Miami progressive activist, arguing that the November election will be a face-off between the economic populism of the Democrats and the cultural populism of the GOP [see "Among the NASCAR Dads," page 18]. "What the Republican Party understands deeply and what the Democrats don't quite get is that down here you have to touch people directly. Among us Southerners you can't transfer relationships, you have to build them. The other side is really good at it. Much better than we are."

O.B.T.: Overcome by Turnout?

What will happen in Florida in November depends not only on grassroots organizing but also on a couple of factors beyond the direct control of either state party organization. While post-2000 election and vote-counting reform has been extensive, it is nevertheless underfunded and incomplete. "The whole mess is still not fully resolved," says Bradford Brown, president of the Miami/Dade NAACP.

Thousands of mostly black voters were improperly purged from the rolls before the 2000 vote when they were incorrectly identified as ex-felons, and while all those affected were to have been notified, notification has not been verified and re-registration has not been addressed. Concerns also still surround voting procedures. Many counties have switched to electronic voting machine systems, but the state government refuses to insist that a verifiable paper trail be required. "Jeb Bush is plain not interested in that idea," says Brown. Recounts are rendered impossible without a paper back-up. And already in one recent by-election, conducted with electronic machines, almost 100 votes were unaccounted for. "I think monitors even from the Ashcroft Justice Department would be preferable to letting this whole thing be overseen by George Bush's brother," says Bishop Curry. "I'm not joking."

The one worry no one seems to have about the Florida vote is turnout. If there's any concern, it might be that there's going to be so much going on in voters' heads and on the state ballot that the voting will remain wildly volatile and unpredictable right up to the last minute. Apart from the presidential match, Floridians will also be choosing a new US senator in a race that's already overheated within both parties. State ballot measures are likely to include legalized gambling, a minimum wage and two opposing legal reform propositions, among others—clashing initiatives from both the right and the left. Voters in populous and strategic Miami/Dade County are also likely to be deciding a mayoral run-off on the same day—possibly between two Democrats. Then there's the added layer of lobbying and get-out-the-vote efforts that will come from interest groups and 527s. And now, maybe even Ralph Nader redux.

"Florida voters are going to be so inundated that they will need giant mailboxes and backup caller-ID machines on their phones," laughs Krog, the former Democratic strategist and now a lobbyist. With voters confronted by so many mixed messages and tugged in so many contradictory directions, the tipping factor could be provided by the national presidential campaigns. Whichever of them is on a roll in the last few days might nudge Florida into either the red or blue column regardless of all the spadework of the previous months. "The military has this phrase: OBE—Overcome by Events," says Krog, suggesting that a variation on that phrase might be in order. "That's the safest prediction for Florida: OBT—Overcome by Turnout." ■

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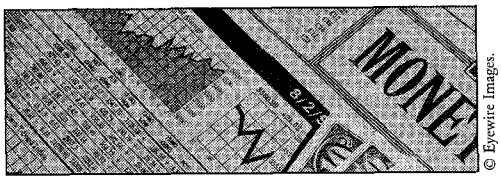

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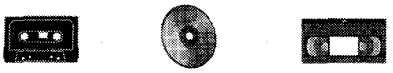

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TIM LANE

Toward a Progressive View on Outsourcing

When Gregory Mankiw, the head of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, remarked on February 9 that outsourcing "is probably a plus for the economy in the long run," he added heat to a debate that has been growing in ferocity as American job losses have mounted and as trade policy has developed into a key issue in the Democratic presidential primaries. In an effort to help develop a progressive position on outsourcing—one that reflects a concern about the well-being of American workers and those in the countries to which many US jobs have fled—we have solicited three views on the subject. We invite readers to respond.
—The Editors

★

Sarah Anderson and John Cavanagh

"Don't worry; they'll get better jobs in the service sector." This used to be the mantra of free-trade supporters when confronted with the shift of auto or apparel jobs to Mexico or China. That line doesn't work anymore, since service jobs, including high-skill computer programming, financial analysis and X-ray reading, are going overseas as well.

Global outsourcing of service jobs is one of the most disturbing manifestations of the US government's corporate-friendly approach to globalization and requires a fundamental reorientation of policy that will aid workers at home and abroad.

Democrats have rightly seized on the issue. They are touting an array of anti-outsourcing proposals, mostly focusing on national measures, such as elimination of taxpayer subsidies. For example, John Kerry advocates banning foreign outsourcing of state and federal government contract work and would also eliminate tax breaks for firms that outsource, while giving tax credits to those that do not. Other US policies that encourage overseas investment could also be targeted. For example:

§ The relatively weak requirements for US firms, compared with European counterparts, to pay severance or negotiate with unions over plans to move jobs overseas.

§ Overseas Private Investment Corporation insurance for corporations investing abroad.

§ Treaties that protect US investors against host-government actions—including public interest laws—that diminish profits.

Changes in these and other areas could help chip away at the incentive to outsource. However, such domestic remedies do not address the main driving force: the extreme gap in wage levels. For example, the average wage gap between the United States and India, the top outsourcing destination in the developing world, is more than 12:1 for telephone operators and about 9:1 for medical transcribers, according to a University of California, Berkeley, study. The next biggest developing-country draw for service work is China (which has rock-bottom wages but lacks India's English-speaking advantage), followed by Mexico, where the wage ratio with the United States is about 8:1.

Overall, global pay gaps result in cost savings for outsourcers of at least 45–55 percent (after accounting for higher infrastructure and other costs), according to the management consulting firm McKinsey and Company. If this is true, figures in the Berkeley study suggest, companies could save around $300 billion a year if they outsourced all of the estimated 14 million US service jobs considered vulnerable to being shipped overseas. Given these vast potential savings, it will be difficult to reduce outsourcing incentives substantially—unless the pay gaps are narrowed.

Of course, this is no easy task. Economists often claim that productivity growth is the key to boosting wages, but this has not been the experience of many developing-country workers. The key impediments to rising pay appear to be rampant unemployment, labor repression and increased employer power to play workers off against one another in a globalized economy. While national governments are not without responsibility for these problems, international financial institutions and trade agreements have also played a role.

For example, the Chinese government estimates that reforms required by the World Trade Organization will destroy the livelihoods of 20 million farmers. Mexico has lost 1.3 million agri-

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cultural jobs under the North American Free Trade Agreement, according to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Urban workers have also been squeezed, as governments, cheered on by the World Bank, have shed workers through privatization. Nearly 26 million Chinese public-sector employees lost their jobs between 1998 and 2002. Rather than foster domestic demand for locally produced food, goods and services, these policies insure an almost bottomless pool of cheap labor.

In this context, it is understandable that workers in these countries line up in droves to apply for positions with US firms. But this doesn't mean these jobs will deliver a better tomorrow. The export jobs on the Mexican border and in southeast China are often dangerous and pay below a living wage. Chinese workers' efforts to win improvements are stymied by an official ban on basic union rights, while in Mexico repression of independent unions in the export factories is unofficial but nearly as effective.

In India, jobs in the international service industry, especially those that are more highly skilled, tend to pay well by national standards. However, labor unions have not gained a foothold in these firms either, and there is a nagging fear that these jobs will evaporate as soon as better deals can be found in the Philippines or elsewhere. Mexico offers a haunting lesson, as the country has hemorrhaged several hundred thousand export jobs in the past few years, many of them to China.

In addition to promoting changes in global trade and finance policies, the US government could learn from the European Union's experience in using targeted aid and common labor and social standards to lift up poorer countries in that region. Living standards in Portugal and other poorer European countries have risen so much that the EU has been able to lift barriers to free-labor movement among member states. They have committed to doing the same for new Eastern European entrants.

The goal should not be to completely eliminate the far greater gaps between the United States and countries, like China and India, that are magnets for American jobs. The point is that the US government should begin to adopt a long-range view and recognize that it is in our self-interest to respond to the outsourcing scare with an approach that goes beyond domestic measures to tackle the global policies that are widening the economic divide. It should offer mechanisms for transferring resources to poorer countries, through debt reduction where appropriate, or aid that benefits the poorest instead of the Halliburtons. And the United States should be a leader in collaborating with other rich nations to expand debt reduction and effective aid programs. Finally, the new approach should include supports for internationally recognized labor rights as well as punishments for corporations that violate them.

Narrowing the global pay gap cannot be accomplished in the course of one or even two presidential terms. But if we do not begin the struggle, the pivotal battle for long-term economic health will certainly be lost.

Sarah Anderson is the global economy project director and John Cavanagh is the director of the Institute for Policy Studies. They are the co-authors of a new report, "Lessons of European Integration for the Americas," available at www.ips-dc.org, and are among the authors of Alternatives to Economic Globalization *(Berrett-Koehler).*

★

Jeff Madrick

Gregory Mankiw's comment that the outsourcing of jobs is good for the US economy properly reflects a few key tenets of broadly accepted trade theory. When a company contracts services or manufacturing to a lower-wage nation, it reduces costs and cuts the prices of its goods and services. This surplus amply benefits consumers, and in general allows the United States to make at home what it makes best.

In fact, it's hard to have taken even a couple of economics courses without essentially agreeing with Mankiw's point. I partly place myself in this camp. But the comments of the Bush Administration's chief economist were still infuriating. They oversimplified trade theory, for one thing. But more disturbing, they were issued by a member of an Administration that is presiding over a jobless recovery and showing only insensitivity to the considerable pain of massive job dislocation and slow wage growth that the theory itself predicts. Most important, the remarks, and most of the reaction to them, overlook the possibility that something new is occurring in the age of both the Internet and the rapidly growing low-wage economies in Asia and the Far East.

For evidence, take the current recovery. Job growth may yet arrive, but by historical standards, a million or two new jobs at least should already have been created. Manufacturing jobs in particular, the easiest to export, are being lost by the millions and are now down to a level first reached in 1958. Weak labor markets are showing up in poor wage growth. Josh Bivens of the Economic Policy Institute points out that labor compensation has gained less in the current economic recovery than in any other in the post–World War II period. The growth of Gross Domestic Product is flowing largely into profits.

No one really knows how many jobs are being outsourced these days, and odds are that the numbers are less alarming than those bandied about. But one survey found that more than 40 percent of US businesses say the weak job market is due to outsourcing of domestic jobs. And job outsourcing is now moving up the skills ladder, meaning America's high level of education may no longer protect workers. Even if we are not already outsourcing as many jobs as is feared, the nation may be on the verge of a far faster growth in the trend.

One of the infuriating ironies of Mankiw's comments is that the beneficent theory he alluded to, and that so much of the media defended him for, applies fully only when unemployment is low, a fact not mentioned by him or anyone I read. "Conditions of full employment are required to validate standard propositions in trade theory," said former Federal Reserve vice chairman and Princeton economist Alan Blinder years ago in a speech to the American Economics Association. "High unemployment calls many of these propositions into question." Without full employment, which is determined by other factors, such as fiscal and monetary policies and the normal machinations of the economy, it is theoretically possible that gains from trade will not outweigh the losses due to job dislocation and lower wages.

This Administration has surely not produced a full employment

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economy. To the contrary, it has cobbled together one of the most inefficient sets of economic policies imaginable—tax cuts mostly for the rich over ten years and rapid increases in military spending. At the same time, the Bush Administration refuses to address seriously the inevitable pain for large swaths of dislocated workers, and the likely dampening effect on wages as well, that free-trade theory routinely predicts. According to many studies, in fact, workers who have lost jobs in general during the past couple of decades have had to take a pay cut on average to get a new one. A newer study shows that workers who lose jobs specifically because of trade take a still bigger pay cut on average.

But should the Democrats be calling for legislation that raises tariffs or restricts outsourcing? Sparingly at best, I would argue. The reason is that even with the above concerns, there is so large a difference in wages and costs of production between rich and poor nations that the benefits of free trade and outsourcing—the so-called surplus—are potentially enormous. Even with some unemployment, these benefits will probably be considerably larger than even the properly measured costs of job dislocation. (Early pro–free trade studies seriously underestimated these costs, by the way.) In addition, if business cannot avail itself of overseas labor and lower-priced imports, it may simply lose world market share to other nations' businesses. Many companies will just close their doors. Finally, most forms of protectionism, such as tariffs, are crude and cannot be easily targeted at the firms and industries that warrant protection.

Still, where does that leave the workers who are hurt? What Democrats should be arguing is that if freer trade and outsourcing are inevitable, there is a clear and urgent policy choice for government. First, the best protection for jobs is full employment. In the high-employment late 1990s, for example, the wages of all income groups rose. Even the best policies might not have provided full employment in current conditions, but the Bush Administration's tax cuts for the rich over time delayed the expansion and created long-term nervousness about the federal budget deficit, which may already have affected hiring decisions. Far more effective would have been a sharp, front-loaded and temporary tax cut aimed at middle- and low-income workers, who would have spent it quickly. Better would have been direct government spending on education, healthcare and infrastructure and on bailing out strapped state governments.

Second, the government should provide ample protection for those who must pay the largest price for free trade. Workers lose jobs, cannot find equivalent ones and often lose their pension and healthcare benefits in the process, or see them reduced. They are typically inadequately educated for the new jobs available. But this Administration has resisted expanding unemployment benefits, it has not adequately funded its much-ballyhooed education program and it has made no serious effort to expand public healthcare coverage. In their hearts, I believe, Administration officials would like nothing more than to privatize Social Security and Medicare in a second Bush term, which would be particularly hard on low-wage American workers—the very workers mostly losing jobs because of trade. The Administration has certainly come up with no interesting new ideas to protect workers except ubiquitous tax cuts.

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The Bush Administration apparently largely operates by the nineteenth-century principle that if you don't have a job it is your fault. But it stands by a set of trade principles—at least when it suits it—that will force job losses through no worker's fault. Such hypocrisy deserves the attention of the political opposition.

Innovative ideas that target aid for displaced workers are welcome, and are the best political weapons. Wage insurance might be one. It would pay displaced workers who found a new job a wage supplement to compensate for their lower pay over a year or two, enabling them ideally to learn new skills on a job.

There are other potential problems from outsourcing in addition to direct job losses and faltering wages. For one thing, lost jobs mean less demand for goods and services at home. Yet historically, thriving domestic demand has been a critical US advantage. In thinking about the theory of free trade, it's also hard to escape the fact that most rich nations today have a long history of high tariffs and quotas. Greater protectionism in the rich nations in my view would be damaging. But it is not necessarily the open-and-shut case many often arrogantly make it out to be.

Meantime, Bush Administration officials are oblivious to the implications of even their own traditional theoretical beliefs, and they should be required to explain themselves.

Jeff Madrick is editor of Challenge *magazine and a contributing economics columnist to the* New York Times. *His latest book is* Why Economies Grow *(Basic).*

★

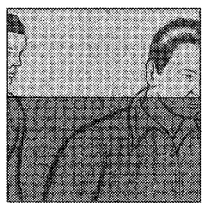
Doug Henwood

Whatever happened to the once-touted Great American Jobs Machine? Lately it seems to have popped a gasket. More than 700,000 jobs disappeared between the official end of the recession in November 2001 and January 2004 (the latest month available), unprecedented behavior during a supposed economic recovery. Where'd they go?

Abroad, is the standard answer, to factories in China and call centers in Bangalore. "Outsourcing" and "offshoring" are the polite ways of putting it, the words preferred by consultants and pundits. In the cruder version, it's "foreigners are stealing our jobs." In the mainstream, the major difference of opinion is whether this is a good thing or not in the long term. The President's top economic adviser, Gregory Mankiw, got into some seriously hot water the other week for saying that the phenomenon represented only the "latest manifestation of the gains from trade that economists have talked about" since the days of Ricardo, two centuries ago. To Ralph Nader and the Democratic presidential candidates, it's a bad thing that explains much of the job market's ills, one of the issues they hope to ride into the White House. Most progressives accept the analysis. The problem is that it doesn't seem to be true.

Let's look at some hard numbers. Since the peak in employment in March 2001, the US economy has lost 2.4 million jobs. But that actually understates the jobs deficit. Historical averages for normal postrecession job growth indicate that employment should be some 8 million higher than it was in January. But estimates of outsourcing, while imprecise, are in the low- to mid-six figures, suggesting that it can explain no more than a twentieth of our jobs problem. And in a more "normal" economy, the US economy would generate half a million jobs every two months. Something else is clearly awry.

The most widely cited projections for offshoring come from Forrester Research, which estimated in a November 2002 report that 3.3 million service-industry jobs would go offshore by 2015. That looks like a big number, but it needs to be put in perspective. In January the United States had 108 million service jobs. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the economy should add 22 million jobs between 2000 and 2010 (almost all of them in services); if we stretch that projection to account for the additional years in the Forrester study, that's 33 million. So the best estimates we have are that the outsourcing total equals about one in thirty of today's jobs, or one in ten of the next decade's new jobs.



Of course, these are headline-level statistics, aggregating sectors and occupations. Most of the job losses in the United States in recent years have not been in services, the main focus of offshoring worries, but in manufacturing. That sector has lost 3.3 million jobs over the past six years, or one in five—far more than during the early 1980s recession, the period that gave us the term Rust Belt.

Everyone knows where those went—Mexico first, then China, right? Maybe not. A study of twenty major economies done last fall by Joseph Carson, the chief economist at Alliance Capital, found that factory employment declined by 11 percent between 1995 and 2002. Brazil lost 20 percent of its manufacturing jobs, and China, rather stunningly, lost 15 percent (mainly because gains in the new private-sector enterprises weren't enough to offset losses in failing state enterprises). Factory employment rose in a handful of countries, but mostly by small amounts. The major reason for the shrinkage, Carson and other economists have explained, is the same as it's been for decades: Machines are doing more of the work, and people, less.

There once was a time when the service sector was expanding enough to offset losses in goods production. That hasn't been happening lately. Since the end of the recession, private service employment has expanded by just 619,000.

So what's up? We can never know for sure, but it's likely that this is what a postbubble economy looks like. After its bubble burst in 1989, Japan lived through more than a decade of economic stagnation, and it was years before people realized that the problem wasn't a matter of a short-term business cycle but something more profound. It's exaggerating only slightly to say that may be what a depression looks like in these days of big governments and indulgent central banks: no outright collapse, but no strong recovery either. But despite sustained low interest rates and bursts of public works spending, the Japanese economy just flatlined its way through the 1990s, and is only now showing signs of serious recovery.

Something similar may be happening here. Driven by exuberance and easy money, the bubble inspired firms to expand and hire aggressively; when the bust came, they were badly bruised. As a result, managers remain very wary about taking on new permanent staff. Worsening the problem is heavy pressure from Wall

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Street to get profits up; the easiest way to do that is to squeeze the existing work force harder. Almost every employed person you talk to has a tale of surviving workers' taking on the responsibilities of employees who leave voluntarily or are laid off. Pundits cite this as evidence of a continuing productivity miracle, but the reality of it is less glamorous—working harder and longer for no increase in pay. But it's much easier to look abroad for the source of our woes than it is to investigate the homegrown reasons.

Whatever the causes, though, our treatment of the unemployed and displaced is scandalously cruel. Fewer than half of the unemployed are drawing benefits. Public expenditure on retraining and job creation is risibly small. There's plenty that could and should be done here, from classic public works projects to less traditional ones like subsidized childcare. These should be the real issues; next to them, "offshoring" is a diversion. ■

Doug Henwood, a contributing editor at The Nation, *edits the* Left Business Observer *(www.leftbusinessobserver.com). His latest book is* After the New Economy *(New Press).*

CAST AS MODERATE AND BENIGN, THE WHITE HOUSE'S WOMEN ARE ANYTHING BUT.

Beware the Bushwomen

LAURA FLANDERS

You can tell when the Bush Administration is rattled. George W. chats up Tim Russert on NBC and Bush's women sit down for a talk with Elizabeth Bumiller of the *New York Times*.

TIM LANE

In January Condoleezza Rice granted an interview to the *Times*. In the middle of a national security meltdown, when the Bush Administration—and Rice herself—stood accused of manipulating intelligence to take the country to war on a false pretext, Bumiller's softball profile, which ran on the newspaper's front page, emphasized not the National Security Adviser's complicity in the scandal but her cozy personal relationship with the President. Among other nonrevelations, readers learned from Secretary of State Colin Powell that Rice's closeness to George W. is "not unusual but at the same time, a little unusual."

A month later, it was Laura Bush's turn. While much of her husband's State of the Union address was written to please the radical right, the First Lady used the opportunity to speak to social moderates. Karl Rove, her husband's Machiavellian political adviser, is not so powerful, the First Lady chuckled. Regarding a constitutional amendment on heterosexist marriage, Laura Bush told Bumiller that the President "just thinks it's something that states and people want to be able to debate." That sounds a whole lot softer than the President's public "defend traditional marriage" pledge. (The quote did not appear in the published article, but did show up on the *Times* website.) In another bone-toss to moderates, Laura Bush announced an $18 million increase in the 2005 budget for the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Bushwomen are the Administration's way of sending two contradictory messages at once. Even as her husband courts social conservatives, Laura Bush lulls moderate voters into believing that the White House is not really in the clutches of the extreme right. Likewise, when the President declared the University of Michigan law school's affirmative action policy unconstitutional, Rice came out with a different line: "I believe that while race-neutral means are preferable it is appropriate to use race as one factor among others in achieving a diverse student body." The President's statement had been crafted to please anti–affirmative action absolutists, but the White House brief in the Michigan case did not actually rule out every use of race in college admissions. Rice was the public face of that far more nuanced position. The two didn't disagree; they just spun two different audiences simultaneously.

As election 2004 approaches, the Bushwomen are on the march. The President's re-election requires appealing to as many constituencies as possible. While, as Richard Goldstein has written, the candidate "butches up" for the fight, the Bushwomen—the First Lady, as well as the women appointed to the inner circle of the President's Cabinet and sub-Cabinet—provide an alternative facade. They are cast as harmless, moderate, irrelevant or benign, and their well-spun image taps into familiar stereotypes about women and people of color, while their political and corporate records remain conveniently out of sight—thanks to a mostly oblivious media.

On the campaign trail, the Bushwomen's mission is to help the GOP solve its female problem. For twenty years, a smaller percentage of women than men have cast their votes for Republicans for President. Of course, highly placed females don't necessarily translate into votes, but it's clear the Republican Party thinks the Bushwomen can help. Just seven months into the Bush presidency, a Republican pollster took a poll and winced. "This is not happy data," he told the press. The President's approval rating stood at a historic low for a leader so early in his first term (51 percent), and the same poll revealed a "precipitous drop" in Republican support among married women with children, the subset of women with which Republican candidates traditionally

Laura Flanders is the host of Your Call, *heard weekdays on KALW-91.7 FM in San Francisco and on the Internet. This article was adapted from* Bushwomen: Tales of a Cynical Species *(Verso). Check www.lauraflanders.com for book-tour information.*

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SHE TOLD ASHCROFT: "Mind your own business." The Court agreed -- it's up to the states!

Angel McClary Raich has an inoperable brain tumor. After her doctor tried everything to keep her from wasting away, he finally recommended marijuana. It saved her life. What's more it got her out of a wheelchair and back with her husband and children.

But the Attorney General says there's no such thing as medical marijuana -- even though studies show otherwise[1] - and it's legal in 9 states. John Ashcroft has been sending his troops out to bust the sick and dying and their care-givers. He even tried to intimidate their doctors but that's where the Supreme Court drew the line.[2]

Now the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals has joined with Angel Raich.[3] They're telling the Attorney General to butt out.

A TIME-CNN poll shows that 80 percent of Americans support medical marijuana for the seriously ill.[4] Isn't it time for the federal government to catch up with science and the people?[5]

www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org, www.DrugWarFacts.org, wwwMedicalMJ.org

Mike Gray, Chair; Robert Field, Co-Chair; Kevin Zeese, President 717-288-0600

[1]"Marijuana and Medicine" Inst.of Medicine, 1999 [2]Walters v. Conant 03-40 [3]Raich v. Ashcroft 9th Cir. No. 03-15481 [4]TIME Nov.4 2002
[5]To find out what you can do to help patients like Angel, contact Americans for Safe Access www.SafeAccessNow.org 1-888-929-4367

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do best. The Republican answer was to pump up the profiles of the highest-ranking women in the Bush Administration. In July 2001 the White House invited female magazine editors and publishers to meet with female officials. The RNC announced it would drive millions of dollars a year into a new campaign, "Winning Women," that would feature profiles of people like former presidential counselor Karen Hughes, then–EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman and Condoleezza Rice.

After September 11, 2001, the President said, "I really don't think about politics right now," but his political team was still at work. As the 2002 midterm elections approached, female swing voters danced like sugar-plum fairies in Karl Rove's head. We know that because someone on the President's staff lost a computer disk containing the senior adviser's election advice. The disk showed up in Washington's Lafayette Park, and Rove's PowerPoint presentation made its way into the hands of journalists. President Bush, said Rove, needs to "grow" his outreach to Latinos, suburban women and Catholics. No one did more campaigning in 2002 than Hughes. ("The rumors of my retirement have been greatly exaggerated," says Hughes, and she's correct.) In 2002 the First Lady stumped for a candidate her husband couldn't, pro-choice Republican Connie Morella. No one except Dick Cheney is more sought-after for campaign fundraisers than First Lady Laura (she raised more than $5 million for her husband's re-election campaign between June 2003 and January 2004), and she arouses none of the negative publicity provoked by the Vice President's ties to corporate contractors in Iraq.

Thanks to press coverage that stresses personality over politics, the women in Bush's inner circle work well as identity-politics puppets.

Rove knows the numbers. Fifty-two percent of voters are female, with suburban women making up about 25–30 percent of the electorate. As pollster Anna Greenberg explains, women, especially white, married suburban women, are "the least solidly attached voters out there," the biggest swingers. Everything else remaining as it is, in 2004 suburban women could win or lose the race. They are certainly the largest "unattached" bloc within the Republicans' grasp.

In 2003, another GOP memo turned up. Mounting job losses and dying soldiers in Iraq had sent Bush's numbers tumbling from the dizzy heights of his post-9/11 popularity down below their pre-9/11 low mark. In California the GOP was hoping to benefit from the effort to recall Democratic Governor Gray Davis. The memo, by California GOP organizer Julie Leitzell, declared that the recall election presented a unique opportunity to target disaffected voters, especially women, before the 2004 presidential race. "It's important that we use this opportunity (and hot news hook) to present an image of diverse Republican women (moms, educators, business owners, students, working women,)" wrote Leitzell. "We want to make sure the media are steered toward the 'common-sense women against Davis' angle.... We are working on getting a big-name female draw for each local event."

This year is another Bushwomen moment. As the economy sputters and living-wage jobs die out, Bush's tax cuts for the wealthy are a liability at the polls. The President himself is no Clinton when it comes to empathy. His "I feel your pain" comes across as a smirk. Besides, the public knows something now about the Big Oil bosses and contract-connected CEOs who pepper his Administration. On social issues the Democrats will go to town with the image of Bush, backed by a celebrating mob of white-haired, white-skinned male congressmen and senators, signing the twenty-first century's first law imposing criminal penalties on doctors who help women get abortions.

Thanks to news accounts that emphasize personality over politics, the female members of Bush's inner circle work well as identity-politics puppets; a kind of PC protection device, they provide superficial cover while the Administration pursues policies that take a disproportionate toll on the lives of women and people of color. The Bushwomen do for Bush's image what "pro-life" language did for the Republican Party's rhetoric.

In the hot seat after the resignation of Trent Lott over comments Lott made on Strom Thurmond's 100th birthday, Bush was forced to defend his record on racism. Asked by the press about his own civil rights record and his consistent refusal to meet with NAACP leaders, Bush gestured to his Secretary of State and National Security Adviser, as if that itself were a sufficient substitute for policy. "Let's see," said Bush. "There I was, sitting around the leader with—the table with foreign leaders, looking at Colin Powell and Condi Rice."

When it came to invading Afghanistan and then Iraq, the White House deployed its female faces to cast a glowing light on war. In mid-November 2001, word was filtering out of Afghanistan that US forces had dropped on alleged Taliban sites two 15,000-pound bombs known as "Daisy Cutters," which are so large they can be delivered only by dropping them out of a cargo plane. They kill every living thing within a radius of 300–900 feet. The First Lady, who'd come to the comfort of bereaved American families after 9/11, went on the radio to reassure the public that the war was not about revenge but about liberation. Running down the record of Taliban brutality toward women—long ignored by the US government—the United States wasn't alone, she said: "Civilized people throughout the world are speaking out in horror, not only because our hearts break for the women and children in Afghanistan, but also because in Afghanistan, we see the world the terrorists would like to impose on the rest of us."

On October 7, 2002, the President warned the American people about "the smoking gun that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud," repeating what Condoleezza Rice and Pentagon spokesperson Victoria Clarke had said a month earlier. Congress voted to grant Bush the power to invade Iraq on the 11th. Although she served for ten years on the board of directors of Chevron and used her Sovietology skills to secure oil contracts for that company throughout the Caspian and the former Soviet republics, Rice isn't perceived as an oilman of Dick Cheney's ilk. She is, but thanks to the stereotypes of our age, to most people she doesn't look it. Lest the public begin to perceive her too as part of the war machine oiligopoly, Rice constantly redirects attention to her personal "narrative" about growing up in segregated Alabama. Indeed, although African-Americans disproportionately opposed the US first-strike invasion of Iraq, and thanks to what

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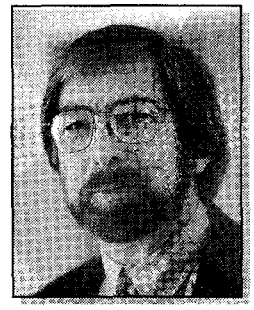

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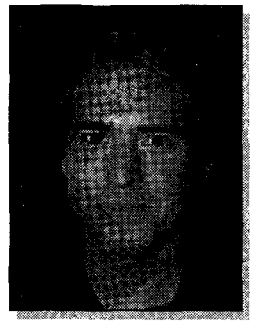
More Speakers to be announced!

Molly Ivins
Political Satirist and *Nation* Contributing Editor

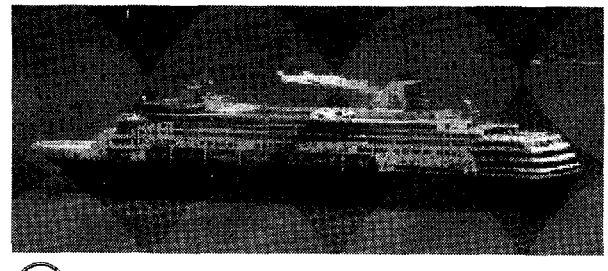


Christopher Scheer
Co-author of *The Five Biggest Lies Bush Told Us About Iraq*

The Herald/Gordon Terris. © SMG Newspapers Ltd

Naomi Klein
Nation "Lookout" Columnist

Date	Day	Ports of Call	Arrive	Depart
Dec. 5	Sun	Ft. Lauderdale, Florida		5:00PM
Dec. 6	Mon	Day at Sea		
Dec. 7	Tue	Day at Sea		
Dec. 8	Wed	Phillipsburg, St. Maarten	8:00AM	6:00PM
Dec. 9	Thu	Road Town, Tortola	7:00AM	4:00PM
Dec. 10	Fri	Day at Sea		
Dec. 11	Sat	Half Moon Cay, Bahamas	8:00AM	4:00PM
Dec. 12	Sun	Ft. Lauderdale, Florida	8:00AM	



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amounts to a poverty draft are overrepresented among the occupation's US dead, Rice claims that the whole Iraqi operation is really about civil rights.

In August 2003 Rice addressed the National Association of Black Journalists: "Like many of you, I grew up around the home-grown terrorism of the 1960s. The bombing of the church in Birmingham in 1963 is one that will forever be in my memory because one of the girls who died was a friend of mine.... [Forty years later] we should not let our voice waver in speaking out on the side of people who are seeking freedom." Denying people the right to freedom, she said, "was wrong in 1963 in Birmingham, and it is wrong in 2003 in Baghdad."

Looking ahead, the worse things get for Bush, the more the Bushwomen will be busy. Who better to reassure an anxious nation than these women, whom most Americans know almost nothing about—thanks to the shallow coverage provided by a stereotype-sodden media? In public relations terms, Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman, whose personal story involves growing up on a family peach farm, is perfectly suited to the task of reassuring consumers that US food is safe to trade and eat, mad-cow disease and *E. coli* outbreaks notwithstanding. This past Christmas Day, Veneman told the nation she would be serving beef to her family. Not mentioned were her years of work on behalf of the nation's biggest industrial food corporations.

As the President's promises on job creation fall flat, Labor Secretary Elaine Chao fronts the Administration line that the economy is full of opportunity. Who better for that job than a self-described Chinese immigrant who is perceived to have risen to high office by dint of family determination, smarts and hard work alone? (Chao's well-connected family, her elite Mount Holyoke education and her marriage to one of the Republican Party's leading men, Mitch McConnell, rarely come up.)

As US fatalities crossed the 500 mark this January, Chao turned up in Baghdad with a message for Iraqi women. "In a democracy the most important factor is energy," she said. For their part, the Iraqi women requested that the United States institute quotas for women in the US-appointed Governing Council. Just weeks before Chao's visit, conservative clerics on that council had led a vote to scrap Iraq's 1959 family laws and place such issues under Muslim religious jurisdiction. Women, who make up a majority of the Iraqi population, received only three seats on the twenty-five-member council; no women participated in the Constitution-writing committee. Chao rejected any form of quotas—women should rise by their own efforts, she said. At the very same time, MADRE was reporting that Yanar Mohammed, founder of the Organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq, was receiving death threats for her efforts to stand up for women's equality.

Iraq's women "are fighting for the soul of your country," Chao told the women she met there. Iraqi women hardly needed telling that they face a fight; their pressure ultimately helped defeat the Governing Council's family law resolution. The message they took from their meeting with Chao is that they can't expect much US help. Chao appears to have uttered not one word about Yanar Mohammed's plight. She did, however, leave the women of Iraq with a present: a framed photograph of her and other senior women officials at the US Labor Department. ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

time. Once again we vote on the lesser of the worst. FLORENCE MURPHY

Warren, Vt.

■ I'm one of Clinton's average Joes. I drink beer and watch football with my son and friends on Sundays. I own my business and consider myself a leftward libertarian. My football buddies laugh at me because I care about politics and social policy. When Dean was running strong the laughter stopped. The conversation became animated. Here was a guy, though a middle-of-the-road Democrat, who expressed himself honestly and brought some of the real issues to the table.

When Dean pulled out so did my football buddies. Politics is once again just more of the rich guys ruining the country. I'm voting for Nader. ROBIN LEHMAN

Prescott, Ariz.

■ Talk about being brutalized. At least Dr. Dean got coverage. Dennis Kucinich has been marginalized to the point of invisibility—by *all* the media. CAROL OLDERSHAW

Milwaukie, Ore.

■ Recently Senators Kerry and Edwards have appropriated Howard Dean's (my candidate) message that "you have the power" to change this country. Now that the nomination process is nearing the end, the story will begin to change, unless we can keep it going.

To keep the excitement and the debate alive, I propose to Democrats that we throw open the vice presidential contest, just as Adlai Stevenson did in 1956. That event introduced excitement and drama into an otherwise stale convention (when Kentucky Senator Estes Kefauver narrowly edged out Senator John F. Kennedy).

Democrats from the bottom up would have another way to participate in the decisions about who will lead the ticket. The talking heads will get to appear on more cable news shows to speculate endlessly on this choice, keeping the debate on our territory for more months to come. I would trust the collective wisdom of our party's delegates to make this choice. Would John Kerry? DAVE MCTEAGUE

Cambridge, Mass.

■ Greider's commentary gets it right. I was the director of the Internet group at the Dean campaign for the final two and a half months and a volunteer for several months before. I am also a senior fellow at the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard.

Howard is Howard. He is fresh, courageous and enjoys identifying problems and working to solve them. The messier the problems, the better: child sexual abuse, child neglect, AIDS, the war in Iraq, the rot of the Democratic Party and the dominance of big media. He had the boldness to take on party leaders. And he had the sense of truth to say to Wolf Blitzer, on camera, that Wolf is in the entertainment business.

People loved Howard when they heard him in person. They loved him because he spoke of their concerns and because he obviously cared about them and the future of the country. They loved his truth-telling, his—to coin a phrase—compassionate indignation.

And Howard really does believe that the only way to improve the country is to engage the people. Our challenges are not technical. Our real problems—racism, the economy, the environment, healthcare, two Americas, special interests and the corruption of government—require citizens to find new ways to come together and shape the future. This was just too radical for the big boys.

Thanks for a wonderful piece. Your appreciation is valued at a moment when many of us who have been in the campaign are feeling pretty beaten down.

By the way, I was alerted to Greider's editorial by a friend who circulated it on the "web-team" internal list at Dean for America. Her comment: "Amen." JIM MOORE

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Notes of a Native Daughter

GENE SEYMOUR

THE END OF BLACKNESS.
By Debra J. Dickerson.
Pantheon. 306 pp. $24.

The title does neither the book nor its author any favors. *The End of Blackness*, merely as a billboard, seems calculated to get a rise out of the people who will most likely reject on first contact whatever it's selling—the very people, Debra Dickerson would argue, who need to read it most.

It's a title that screams contrarianism. And for many African-Americans, "contrarianism" is almost always synonymous with conservatism, accommodation, even treason to the race. None of these charges effectively cling to Dickerson. But her armor's strapped on too tight for her to care what people think. "I'm spoiling for a fight," she declares in her acknowledgments. "I have pulled my last punch with the 'blacker-than-thou' brigade.... [This book] is my gauntlet thrown down to the black powers that be. Pick it up if you dare, but you'd better come correct."

I can relate to Dickerson's combative stance. I share the exasperation that provokes it. I think of all the times I would hear black people proclaim, with fierce and unyielding conviction, that the white man is the Devil. And of all the times when I would want to shout back, *How is calling the white man the Devil any different from calling him God? Either way, you're ceding him more power over your destiny than he deserves. It's relinquishing autonomy over your own life*. I kept such comebacks to myself, because I didn't want to be censured or ostracized for violating the customary loop of black discourse. I wish, on a purely visceral level, that I could throw down as Dickerson does here, if only to void the accumulated bile of so much stifled dissent.

Her force field's so thick she won't care if there are black readers who couldn't get past the introductory pages of her 2000 memoir, *An American Story*, which focus on her years as an Air Force enlisted woman and knee-jerk "blame-the-victim" Reaganite. Once a righty, always a righty, *n'est-ce pas*? Never mind that the sister went through all manner of psychic and intellectual changes, from her working-class childhood in St. Louis to her long, strange pilgrimage through the military, out the other end of which she's a born-again progressive bearing down on Harvard Law School like a laser beam. Even as both her self-esteem (from a series of clueless teachers, relatives and varied alleged grown-ups) and her body (via rape by a fellow serviceman) came under vicious assault, her mind stayed open to possibility and alert to complexity. She seems never to have met an idea or a presumption that she didn't hold under the light, checking for cracks or warped edges. Citizenship, she believes, demands nothing less than vigilant skepticism even toward one's own skepticism.

Debra Dickerson seems never to have met an idea that she didn't hold under the light, checking for cracks or warped edges.

But for African-Americans embittered by citizenship's faulty promises, a permanent state of war has existed with white supremacy, a war in which any trace of skepticism toward tactics, ideology and agreed-upon beliefs is perceived as a back-door opening to concession, if not outright surrender. It will not please any of these folks to learn that *The End of Blackness* is being submitted to the general public as a brief for letting go, if not giving up.

"What blacks must surrender," Dickerson writes in her introduction, "is the notion that they can be made whole for the centuries of loss and degradation they endured, that whites can be made to suffer guilt and shame equal to the portion they have dealt blacks, that white America will ever see itself the way its black citizens do.... Whites will never cringe with the shame blacks feel appropriate; they will never welcome blacks nonchalantly into their neighborhoods and schools—or, at least, blacks should assume so. Practically speaking, as both intermarriage and black uplift continue, whites will passively participate in integration, but blacks still should not list it among their goals. They should ignore whites qua whites and focus on being prime movers."

Gene Seymour is a film critic and jazz columnist for Newsday.

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Such rhetoric has been linked by some readers to the distant sounds of buckets being cast down. But Dickerson can't easily (or usefully) be linked to the ghost of Booker T. Washington, and *The End of Blackness* is too discursive and ill tempered to be taken for an echo of Washington's Atlanta Compromise. Washington's oracular prescriptions were lofted to the heavens, where his listeners were implored to reach. Dickerson, much in the manner of contemporary public dialogue, provokes, needles, gets in your face, sets off cherry bombs; anything to keep you awake, especially when you're least inclined to hear her out.

That title, again, could be a red flag or a repellent. Why *The End of Blackness*? Why does "blackness" have to get snuffed when it's "whiteness" that maims aspirations and kills dreams? If one goes, the other has to walk the plank too. Maybe even go first, thank you very much. "If I am not who you say I am, then you are not what you think you are," James Baldwin famously informed his white readers. (Along with Baldwin, W.E.B. Du Bois, Zora Neale Hurston, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Carter G. Woodson, Amiri Baraka and E. Franklin Frazier make up the ancestral posse Dickerson deploys for backup.)

Dickerson isn't quibbling. In fact, white supremacy gets its omelet-fluffy head slapped around for more than half the book in a scathing if familiar litany of political and personal transgressions against Africans. We all know how bad things were from slavery through Jim Crow. Then again, Dickerson argues, maybe we don't:

> Only the loss of understanding that blacks were once literally, officially second-class citizens and subject to the whim of any white anywhere in America can account for the fact that many blacks today claim that "nothing has changed" and equate the paucity of black faculty at Harvard Law School with Jim Crow. That charge is an obscenity. Jim Crow hanged black men for taking pride in their homes. Jim Crow cut fetuses from black women's bellies when they protested the lynching of their husbands for acting like men. Jim Crow taxed the black population, but refused to pave or police or educate the black part of town.... Jim Crow had white parents chuckling while their children threw rocks from their school bus windows at black children trudging to bookless, one-room shanty schools.... Jim Crow was active, pulsating evil that proudly detested blacks...

"Thanks to the civil rights movement," she continues, "black Americans are free and thriving. No one, apparently, is more surprised by that than some black Americans. Nothing else can explain their need to continue believing they are marginalized, that whites are all-powerful and all evil and that America wants to see them fail. Some blacks have absorbed white supremacist notions and cannot give up perpetual protest, their only avenue to receiving Caucasian attention."

As far as Dickerson is concerned, "whiteness" and "blackness," as they are commonly understood, are locked in a satanic tango over American consciousness, with "blackness" following the other's lead. "Whiteness" in post–civil rights America has congealed and hardened into what Dickerson encapsulates as "narcissistic know-nothingness." It may no longer literally lynch or bludgeon, as Jim Crow did. But it continues to covet its inflated sense of supreme privilege and deny its more complex cultural connections with blackness. "Not because whites hate blacks per se," she writes. "They ostentatiously fear and feel superior to blacks, both of which feelings have to do with how precious whites think themselves."

Meanwhile, "blackness," Dickerson argues, feeds off and further pumps up this narcissism by defining itself almost exclusively in terms of white oppression. "Blacks simply do not know who or how to be absent oppression. To cease invoking racism and reveling in its continuance is to lose the power to haunt whites, the one tattered possession they'll fight for while their true freedom molders unclaimed. It is to lose the power to define themselves as the opposite of something evil, rather than on their own terms. Much more bravery is required to assert black power, set an autonomous agenda, and court the failure that too many blacks fear is all they're capable of."

If these sentences lack polish, it's because Dickerson is opting for force over grace. The headlong momentum of her argument, propelled by anecdotes, quotes, homilies, one-liners and blogs, jumps and hums with a vitality reminiscent of high-end pop music, good chase movies or contact-sports television. This brawling abandon accounts as much for the book's appeal as it does for its problems. She does, in the manner of a relentless debater on a mission, have a tendency to repeat many of her key points, in case they're missed the first time around. And while broad-stroked generalizations can't be avoided in a polemic as unapologetic as this, *The End of Blackness* can sometimes seem as impervious to measured reflection as the attitudes it seeks to demolish.

I raise my fist in salute when Dickerson declares the mind to be "the last plantation." At the same time, she makes me wish she'd brought to her witness stand *The Last Plantation*, Itabari Njeri's quixotic and undervalued 1997 inquiry into shape-shifting multicultural America near the twentieth century's conclusion. Njeri challenged readers to broaden to a shattering point the same narrow parameters of "blackness" and "whiteness" as Dickerson does. But Njeri widened her view to take in the myriad rogue elements being brought to the American cultural bounty by Asian, Latino and other hyphenated Americans. Dickerson's focus is more on black-white dynamics—though, to her credit, she throws a well-aimed sucker punch at the white hierarchy's tendency to set nonwhite cultures against one another. "As whites squirm their way out of black demands, they turn to other minorities as guilt- and concessions-buffers." Thus Asians and Latinos are praised and even rewarded for diligence and hard work. "Whites remain on top, but they signal that Hispanics and Asians can outrank blacks while they work on their promotions to whiteness."

The End of Blackness scatters, flags, almost loses its legs toward the end, when Dickerson yields the floor to joke lists that members of the black middle class send to each other through e-mail as if in a cyberspace ritual of self-mockery. (Examples: "YOU KNOW IT'S A GHETTO SALON WHEN... All the stylists wear house slippers.... YOU'RE A CORPORATE NEGRO IF... You think anyone without an office job is ghetto" and so on.) All of which is marshaled to signify the dreary levels of self-loathing toward which African-Americans have allowed themselves to sink by investing their identities in hidebound concepts of "blackness." Get over it, Dickerson urges. Think outside the box and "transcend the ragtag reminders of racism by refusing to be demoralized by them."

So what is to be done? Those looking for a ten-point program or a well-marked road map toward direct action won't find it here—and will likely find more reasons to throw things at Dickerson. She may affirm charges of conservatism by urging blacks to "do for self." (Then again, when have blacks ever been told to do anything else?) She doesn't come down hard against seeking reparations for centuries of slavery and segregation, but rather aims a gimlet eye at the manner in which such pleas are submitted: "Bereft of a unifying and legitimizing intellectual-moral framework, blacks rarely respond by pointing out that reparations

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are demanded from America, not from the white residents of America, but from an America which includes blacks and is supported in large measure by the wealth created by blacks." She is cagey on the subject of affirmative action; without opposing affirmative action outright, she takes a swipe at black leaders for emphasizing it "above all other goals...even though the black masses derive little benefit from it. Why? Because it disguises the elite black interest as the general black interest. Also, because whites don't like it."

Point taken. But what does she propose? Apparently, nothing more than comprehensive attitude adjustment: "Blacks must monitor white people so as to safeguard their piece of the pie, but they otherwise should ignore them politically. Black self-worth simply cannot hinge on other people's behavior: So what if people eyeball them suspiciously? So what if rent-a-cops follow them around? So what if a random white woman clutches her purse when they pass? Is it not obvious that much of this behavior persists merely because it feeds whites' need to be central to everything? All blacks can control is their behavior, not other people's narcissistic and inglorious needs. If you know who you are, why does it matter so much that a powerless stranger has you all wrong?"

This may not be news to as many people as Dickerson—or, for that matter, her critics—imagines. If anything, it's possible that *The End of Blackness*, however much it goes over the top and gets too fast and loose in presentation, may have arrived in time to affirm many African-Americans' suspicions that something, anything, drastically new in leadership and collective attitude is needed right now. In her acknowledgments Dickerson nods to the "intellectual and political fervor emanating from the hip-hop generation," which, as is habitual among younger folks, wants to bust open and transfigure traditional social and political discourse among African-Americans. Many will persist in thinking of *The End of Blackness* as part of the problem. But no one should be surprised if future solutions can trace their emotional foundation to Dickerson's all-encompassing crankiness. Of course, the best thing a book like *The End of Blackness* can do is help make its what-blacks-must-do-next genre obsolete. ■

My Dinner With Aleksander

BENJAMIN PALOFF

MY CENTURY: The Odyssey of a Polish Intellectual. By Aleksander Wat. Edited and translated by Richard Lourie. Foreword by Czeslaw Milosz. New York Review Books. 407 pp. $16.95.

In 1964 an important if somewhat obscure Polish writer and public intellectual named Aleksander Wat arrived at the University of California, Berkeley, and began the work that would eventually become *My Century: The Odyssey of a Polish Intellectual*. First published in Polish in 1977 and released in an abridged English translation a decade later, it is one of the most remarkable literary memoirs of the last century. Thus a measure of gratitude is due to New York Review Books for the volume's reissue, which is bound to enlarge its audience beyond those who already consider it a masterpiece.

We should note that this masterpiece almost didn't happen: Things were not going well when Wat landed in the Bay Area. He had been invited by the Center for Slavic and East European Studies. Although they imposed no formal institutional obligations on him, Wat's hosts hoped that their guest would be able to use his time to add to his slim collections of poems and stories, which he'd been writing since the 1920s. But in spite of Wat's best intentions and ambitious plans, he was unable to write or, for that matter, to do much of anything. A stroke in 1953 had left him with excruciating bouts of pain in his face; crippling agony could be brought on by even momentary concentration. Concerned that no good would come of his visit, the center's director suggested that someone record conversations with Wat about his life and work, which might make a good foundation for an autobiography. Czeslaw Milosz, the future Nobel laureate and then-professor of Slavic literature, took up the task.

Milosz had been teaching at Berkeley for just a few years, and there must have been a consensus that, as a Polish intellectual eleven years Wat's junior, a fellow poet and a disillusioned defector from the Communist government he'd served, Milosz would have shared many points of reference with Wat. He did. Milosz met with Wat regularly and recorded their conversations until the summer of 1965, when he followed Wat to Paris and continued their sessions. In his foreword to this volume, Milosz attests that although at first "the aim was therapeutic," the younger poet could not help but find himself drawn in by Wat's sharp insights and reminiscences.

In fact, as *My Century* illustrates exceedingly well, one would be hard-pressed to find a shrewder or more attentive witness to the events that shaped Central Europe's history in the twentieth century. Between the world wars, Wat traveled in circles where the distinction between politics and literature all but dissolved, giving rise to bold experimentation in both, and leading to the inevitable consequence that those who wielded the pen often caught the sword's attention as well. At one time or another, Wat shared a meal, a jail cell or exile with an astounding roster of cultural figures, from Witkacy, the audacious Polish avant-garde writer, to Russian literary critic Victor Shklovsky. Wat's book reads like a softly glowing missive from that lost world.

Born in 1900 to a family of the old Jewish intelligentsia, Wat achieved his earliest recognition as a Futurist poet, cultivating friendships with such luminaries as Paul Éluard and Vladimir Mayakovsky. By the late 1920s he had risen to prominence as the editor of a major Communist literary monthly—called, with austere Communist charm, *The Literary Monthly*—bringing him considerable attention from European writers and artists, and perhaps less desirable attention from anti-Communists within the Polish government. The magazine was dissolved, Wat was arrested for the first time and after his release spent most of the 1930s working in publishing. While fleeing Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939, Wat was accidentally separated from his wife and son, and was arrested by the Soviet authorities a short time later. There followed several years of intermittent imprisonment, exile in Kazakhstan (where Wat was reunited with his family), return to Poland, requisite flip-flopping between favor and disfavor with the postwar Communist government and finally permanent exile in Paris.

All this information is more essential backstory than a digest of the book's content. *My Century* is by no means a conven-

Benjamin Paloff writes regularly on poetry for The Boston Review.

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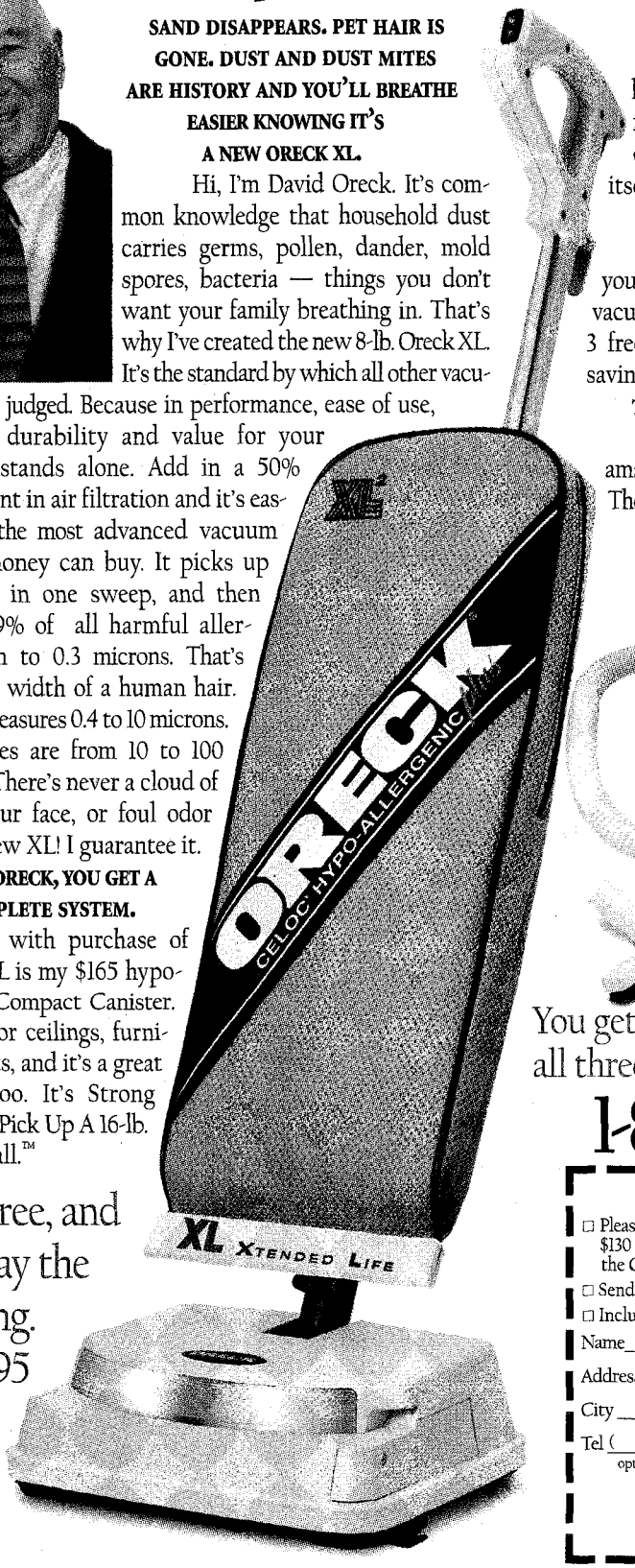

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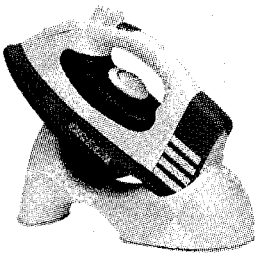

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tional autobiography, much as its editors have struggled to arrange its memories, digressions and flashbacks into something resembling a chronological arc. Rather, Wat's transcribed conversations with Milosz seek to flesh out and, ultimately, come to grips with one man's encounter with history, and Wat seems to recognize at every turn how his own experience of politics, war, exile and even religious conversion (Wat adopted his own idiosyncratic version of Christianity while in a Soviet prison in Saratov) reflects the social and intellectual dilemmas of his fellow man.

Describing the influences on his spiritual development, Wat characterizes his heritage appropriately as "a hotchpotch": Though ethnically Jewish, Wat's relatives included Hasidim and atheists, as well as Catholic priests. In a sense, the same can be said of this book. At times it resembles social anthropology, a thick description of the lives of the literati, political prisoners and deportees during an extremely turbulent period in Europe's history. At other times *My Century* suggests a gossip column about avant-garde writers and the intellectual elite, full of lighthearted commentary on ideology, sex and very often both. Wat lends a chummy atmosphere to gatherings at Shklovsky's apartment, where the great director Sergei Eisenstein and the humorist Mikhail Zoshchenko were among the guests:

> Paustovsky was there and Zoshchenko with his lovely young wife, who had a beautiful figure. Eisenstein used to come sometimes too, a fantastic person in a demonic sort of way. His eyes. When he looked at you, you knew you were being photographed. But he did that with his soul; it wasn't just physical. Strange eyes—I'd never seen anything like them. Marshak, the children's writer, came every once in a great while. But Zoshchenko was there all the time. And there was Shnaider, a marvelous man, a screen writer. He was in the final stages of tuberculosis. He'd also written some prose, which I read, very un-Russian prose, not a trace of any political tone or subtext. And there was Miss Shub, one of the founders of the avant-garde in film, Kinooka. That was the club.

Never mind that it was 1941, Wat had just arrived in Kazakhstan, he had to hide for fear of being arrested again, his body had been ravaged by prison life, his family was still missing. Wat's account pushes bewilderment and fear backstage, foregrounding his keen perceptions of the moment.

Because Wat's story focuses on the three decades between 1920 and 1950, arguably the most eventful years in the lives of himself, his family and his countrymen, the book is suffused with an air of careful reflection as the poet-philosopher plumbs his past triumphs and errors. To Wat's credit, this reflection never takes on the maudlin or self-indulgently nostalgic tones that too frequently burden the literary memoir as a genre, perhaps because Wat seems to have come to terms with his past long before this project was undertaken. Of particular interest is the theme of conversion—religious, ideological, aesthetic—to which Wat returns often in his discussions with Milosz. Given the torments Wat and his family suffered under the Stalinists, it would be understandable if he were to flagellate himself on occasion for his youthful attraction to Communism, but he does not. Instead, he describes Communism most often in religious terms ("I consider any aid I render to Communism a mortal sin"); having suffered his due in Purgatory by the time these conversations were recorded, Wat manages to address his past with unflagging sobriety and judiciousness. Consider, for instance, his description of being led away to an interrogation in Lubyanka, Moscow's infamous prison:

Despite the suffering he endured under Stalinism, Wat manages to address his past with unflagging sobriety and judiciousness.

> That was my first time in Lubyanka's Kafkaesque corridors. The guards who were escorting me clicked their tongues before turning a corner, to alert other guards escorting other prisoners. Sometimes they used their metal buckles to make a sound. Everything was quiet at Lubyanka, perfectly quiet, and it was only in that corridor (it was around eleven o'clock) when passing an office door that I heard a woman scream, a woman being tortured. She had a beautiful contralto voice; I wrote a poem about it. A terrible scream, just one. Later on I learned that, supposedly, screams like that were stage-managed. They weren't always authentic; they were done to induce the proper mood in the prisoners in the neighboring cells. Anyway, that was the first scream in the night that I heard at Lubyanka.

Such sure detachment rarely enjoys the company of true incisiveness in life writing. The most acute observers of historical catastrophe are very often too inarticulate to provide much more than bone-dry ledgers of names and dates: Witness the evolution of the "Written With" genre of political autobiography. Otherwise, in the case of magnificent prose stylists like Vladimir Nabokov, Primo Levi or Witold Gombrowicz—Wat's contemporary and compatriot—the experience of history bends to the dictates of artistry, resulting in what we commonly call the "semi-autobiographical." But for all the elegance of Wat's mind, he never strays into fancy, nor does he compromise his consideration of the past with simplification or apology.

It is in the stunning fortitude of these reflections that readers will find this book's greatest value, and not in an undeviating survey of Wat's undeniably fascinating life. For the latter, one must turn to Tomas Venclova's *Aleksander Wat: Life and Art of an Iconoclast* (1996), the definitive critical biography, which places the entangled material of Wat's work in a much more easily navigable historical and cultural context. Despite the best efforts of the editors of *My Century*, including their addition of a chronology, a glossary of proper names and digestible chapter headings, the text is a monster; the glossary of proper names alone runs sixteen pages. As memoir composed orally, with no concrete plans for later publication, the text flits associatively from one topic to the next until its author alights on an issue of special interest, whereupon he digs in with remarkable intensity and vigor of mind. Indeed, this is that uncommon kind of book that an engaged reader can revisit year after year, jumping around at one's leisure. Until the reader establishes that foothold, however, it may be difficult to weather the blizzard of unfamiliar place names and personalities before arriving at Wat's brilliant treatments of the nature of political terror or of how one's sense of time changes in prison.

The dizziness that *My Century* induces is a natural consequence not only of the method of the book's composition but of the identity of its co-creator. In his own development as a writer and thinker, Czeslaw Milosz is perhaps a little too much like Wat himself: They know so many of the same people, have read so many of the same books and have faced such similar ideological crises that there is almost never a moment of incomprehension or misunderstanding between them, which means that if the reader happens to lose the thread of the conversation, neither Wat nor Milosz is likely to extend a helping hand.

Slightly more problematic is the fact that, much as he usually succeeds in making his presence inconspicuous, Milosz is

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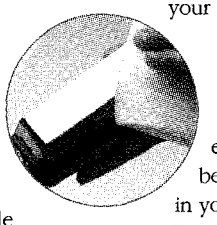

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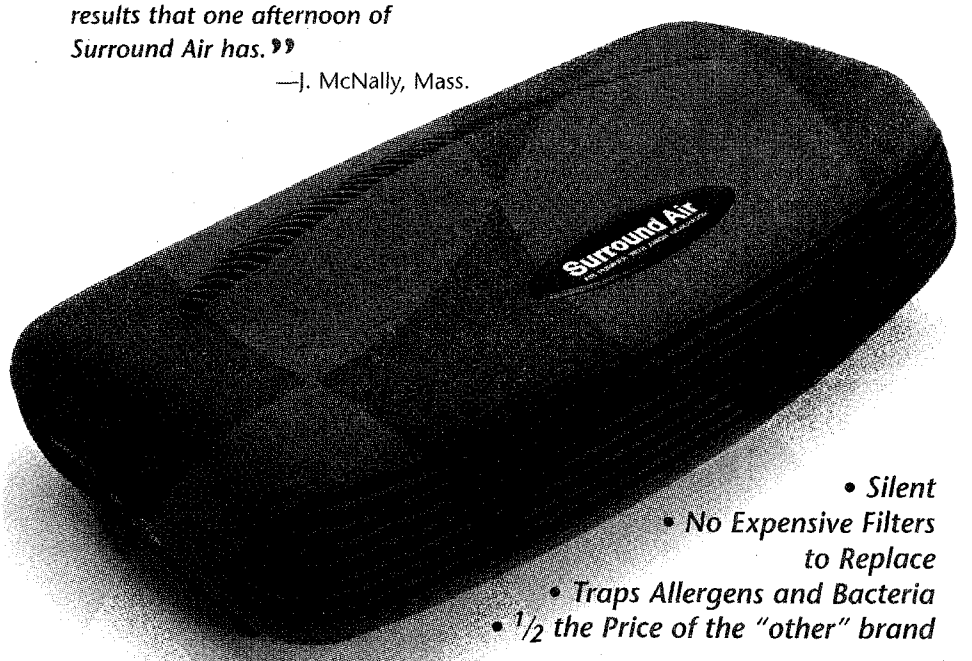

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very much Wat's collaborator in this autobiographical endeavor. He asks perceptive questions, certainly, spurring Wat toward his own virtuosic discourses, but Milosz also intrudes, sometimes with silly enthusiastic interjections ("Fantastic"), sometimes with more egregious editorializing. A noteworthy example comes early in the book, when Wat is talking about a meeting with Paul Éluard:

> WAT:...Now he was with his new wife, whom he'd met in Mexico. A French woman, very brave, and no doubt a communist. On the whole the wives played an enormous role in all that. The wives, especially the Jewish ones, played an enormous role in pushing writers toward communism.
>
> MILOSZ: It's no secret that women have no sense of measure.
>
> WAT: Yes.... And so Éluard arrived, and an interview with him appeared in the press.

It's a funny moment, since Wat himself doesn't seem to know what to do with Milosz's oddly misogynistic comment. Funnier still is that the editors didn't remove such passages from the finished text, which preserves Milosz's heavy imprint despite the years of painstaking transcription, editing, translation and re-editing it took to bring this book to an English-speaking audience.

Or perhaps this is not so odd. Milosz has had some hand in virtually the entire existence of Aleksander Wat in English, from Lillian Vallee's translation of the story collection *Lucifer Unemployed* (1990), for which Milosz wrote the foreword, to *With the Skin: Poems of Aleksander Wat* (1989), translated by Milosz and Leonard Nathan. Given Milosz's enormous stature as a poet, one might get an exaggerated sense of Wat's place in Polish letters, especially in light of the fact that so many of the outstanding Polish writers who have not been graced with the Milosz stamp of approval have failed to find the international audience they deserve. With more specific regard to *My Century*, the force of Milosz's reputation may have inhibited the editors from excising his more intrusive remarks or, for that matter, eliminating them from the book altogether, since the foreword and introduction lay bare the text's provenance anyway.

This is not intended as an indictment of Milosz, who need not answer for his personal tastes, and whom we should thank for bringing us *My Century* in the first place. But it does say something about the culture of American publishing, which has a tendency to latch on to one or two writers—usually living in the United States, usually Nobel laureates, a Milosz, a Joseph Brodsky—and to treat them as arbiters of good taste from abroad. One has to assume that without Milosz's name emblazoned on the cover, the English version of *My Century* would have remained out of print.

One might also have hoped that a new generation of editors would have been less reluctant to improve on the current work. Rather than adding to or rearranging the text, which Richard Lourie has rendered into English exceedingly well, the New York Review Books edition is a photoreproduction of the first English printing. This version of *My Century* represents slightly more than half of the text as it originally appeared in Polish. It is mildly disappointing that no effort has been made to reconsider the earlier omissions or to make the text more user-friendly to first-time readers, for while Milosz's interruptions can be a nuisance, and while the flurry of exotic names and places may prove daunting for the uninitiated, *My Century* is a monument to powerful autobiographical writing. Now that Poland's long-awaited accession to the European Union is upon us, there may be no better time to sit down with Wat and consider the many reasons such an occasion would have been inconceivable in his lifetime.

Sadly, Wat never lived to see the publication of the work that would secure his literary legacy. By July 1967, ten years before *My Century* would first appear in Polish, Wat could no longer bear his physical anguish and declining health: He took a bottle of sleeping pills and died quietly at his Paris apartment. And yet it is a testament to the book's genius that it nevertheless earns the title its editors imposed on it. By describing just a few momentous decades, Wat succeeds admirably in capturing an entire century's worth of spiritual and ideological struggle. ■

MUSIC

Raw Material

BRIAN MORTON

MILES DAVIS: In Person Friday and Saturday Nights at the Blackhawk, Complete The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions

Since Miles Davis died on September 28, 1991, the merchandising machine has been in overdrive, pushing repackaged classics (*Kind of Blue*, *Sketches of Spain*), niche compilations and concert anthologies (*Mellow Miles*, *Heard Around the World*), and posthumous remixes aimed, as Miles himself often did, at a new constituency beyond the jazz audience. His two principal labels, Columbia and Warner Bros., have collated his work with saxophonist John Coltrane and arranger Gil Evans. More sumptuous is the boxed set of his appearances at the Montreux Jazz Festival between 1973 and 1991, twenty CDs and well over twenty hours of music. The Miles Davis estate has had the trumpeter's famously lithe silhouette, familiar from re-issues of *Sketches of Spain*, registered as a logo. Even the art market was briefly flooded with Miles's psychedelic doodles, the legacy of a time when he seemed to prefer sketching backstage to playing trumpet on it. It is an astonishing afterlife, though one that perhaps says more about the music industry than about the protean artist it celebrates.

True fans are always archeologists, and boxed sets are the potsherds of genius. But they're also often long on chaff, a triumph of commercial packaging over musical insight, and some of the recent Miles Davis boxed sets have left one wondering, Do we really need to hear every note Miles played in the studio? The much-trumpeted *Complete Bitches Brew Sessions* was actually no such thing, but a bland collage of complete and unedited takes that offered little insight into how Davis and his team worked. The earlier *Complete In a Silent Way Sessions* boxed set was more fruitful, but left most listeners feeling that the original album edit was as close to perfect as anyone might wish.

The two most recent Miles boxed sets are exceptions to the rule. Nothing short of revelatory, they alter our understanding of two of the most overlooked recordings—

Brian Morton is co-author of the Penguin Guide to Jazz on CD.

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indeed, moments—of Miles's career. *The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions*, a work of electric jazz recorded in 1970, shows how an apparently minor soundtrack project led to one of Miles's most dramatic stylistic and demographic shifts, a phase in his career when his and his audience's understanding of "jazz" was robustly challenged. The straight-ahead jazz on *In Person Friday and Saturday Nights at the Blackhawk, Complete*, a generously augmented version of two live LPs taped at the San Francisco club in 1961, seems, at first, a more routine affair. Yet it arguably contains even more significant revelations.

It's a cliché that Miles Davis's two instruments were the trumpet and the recording studio. It's probably more accurate to say that just as the shimmering orchestral projects of the late 1950s and early 1960s were collaborations with arranger Gil Evans, the innovative and controversial work that came along at the end of the next decade represented a new form of collaboration between Miles and his producer, Teo Macero, who spliced and collaged the jam sessions into the sleek artifacts that were released as *In a Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew*. It's easy to satirize the way the men worked together: Turn on the machines, watch for the red light and play formlessly until you decide to stop, then hand over the material. For debunkers, Miles's seeming abdication of basic musical control was seen as a symptom of artistic carelessness, if not lethargy. In this view, it was Macero who was the artist, not Miles Davis, who simply provided the raw material.

The argument doesn't hold much weight, however. For one thing, Miles was always attracted to radical shifts in the means of production, almost as much as he was to new ways of playing. He was one of the first jazz musicians to experiment with overdubbing, and by the late 1960s he had come to see the studio as a new way to approach composition, a conviction that was reinforced by his awareness that studio-confected rock was fast encroaching on his audience. Yet within the enclosed space of the studio, Miles remained an improviser. And, as *The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions* demonstrates, he was seeking to generate structures from the impromptu discoveries of improvisation. Until now, *A Tribute to Jack Johnson* (the title of the 1971 release) was a sleeper in the Miles Davis canon. Columbia Records paid it scant attention, putting their marketing effort squarely behind *Live at the Fillmore East*, recorded a month earlier.

That very title suggests how far Davis had traveled in the previous ten years. By the end of the 1960s, he was reaching out to a new audience with a striking new sound. In March 1970, Miles and what has been called the "lost quintet" appeared at the Fillmore East, Bill Graham's New York rock barn, as part of a strange-bedfellows billing with Neil Young and Crazy Horse and the Steve Miller Band. On those nights, they played material mainly from *In a Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew*. During the days, though, something new was being run down at Columbia's Studio B on West 52nd Street, a classic jazz address for such unexpected music.

At the time, Miles's basic group consisted of Steve Grossman (who replaced Wayne Shorter on soprano sax), pianist Chick Corea, English bassist Dave Holland, drummer Jack DeJohnette and Brazilian percussionist Airto Moreira. Over the course of four months, though, Miles would recruit a number of other players. Many were veterans of the *Bitches Brew* sessions, but some were young, unseasoned musicians hardly out of their teens. Grossman was just 19; electric bassist Michael Henderson, poached from Stevie Wonder's group, was also still a teenager. The most important voice of all, though, was an up-and-coming English guitarist by the name of John McLaughlin—the driving force on wild, improvisatory pieces like "Right Off" and "Willie Nelson."

In his tribute to the boxer Jack Johnson, Miles Davis was trying to generate structures from the impromptu discoveries of improvisation.

A Tribute to Jack Johnson wasn't the first time a film project effected a change in the trumpeter's stylistic thinking. Miles had recorded a moody and abstract soundtrack for the 1958 Louis Malle *noir* film *Elevator to the Gallows*. It was a spontaneous recording, made without pre-arranged themes or chord structures, and it opened up a dramatic new sound-world for Miles, more concerned with mood than with harmonic line and logic. The phase that opened up with *Bitches Brew* and took a fresh turn with the *Jack Johnson* sessions was both an extension of that abstraction and a deviation from its floating, almost unmetrical pulse. Along with McLaughlin's guitar, Henderson's almost primitively locked-in bass was the new signature sound, anchoring the funky, Day-Glo ostinati that Miles preferred as backdrops to his increasingly free improvisations. The dense keyboard textures and polyrhythmic percussion that became the signature sound of *Bitches Brew* gave way to something leaner, darker and faster on its feet.

Unlike the Malle film, William Cayton's documentary on the life of boxer Jack Johnson—who won the world heavyweight title in controversial circumstances in 1908 and lost it again equally controversially seven years later—was close to Miles's heart. Johnson's flamboyance, conspicuous success and clashes with the white establishment seemed to prefigure Miles's own. The trumpeter also liked to hang out in boxing gyms and spar, helping to build the image of a sharply combative little cat always ready to defend his turf. Many of the tracks on *The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions* are named after great boxers: "Ali," "Duran," "Archie Moore."

The original *Tribute to Jack Johnson*, released in February 1971, consisted of just two LP-side pieces, "Yesternow" and "Right Off." Both were assembled after the fact by Teo Macero, but the basic performances remained surprisingly intact. At the April 7, 1970, session "Right Off" began as a vague studio jam. McLaughlin, presumably bored with waiting while Miles and Teo talked shop in the booth, started to play a shuffle vamp in E. Henderson and drummer Billy Cobham picked up on it and started to play. Herbie Hancock had been passing through and was drafted on organ. After a few minutes, the red light was on, and Miles was in the studio playing some of the fiercest trumpet of his career.

The "Right Off" that appeared on the original record consisted of edits from three takes of the theme made that day, together with an unaccompanied trumpet solo Miles had taped for Macero in November 1969. These takes are now available in full. "Yesternow" was compiled in a similar way, using takes of "Willie Nelson" recorded in February 1970 with a different band. This lineup included Chick Corea on electric piano, Bennie Maupin on bass clarinet and a second guitarist, the heavily echoplexed Sonny Sharrock. Again, Macero reverted to the 1969 solo trumpet tape and to an orchestral accompaniment underneath actor Brock Peters's narration. It's a less surprising track, but no less powerful than "Right Off" and driven by the same visceral intensity, thanks to a twelve-minute bass riff ripped off from James Brown and Sly Stone.

When Miles returned to the studio two years later to record *On the Corner*, he made an even more blatant bid for a new rock constituency, with doubled guitars and an even skimpier bass line. Perhaps the mes-

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sage of *Jack Johnson* didn't get across to the trumpeter's satisfaction. It remains, however, the roughest, rawest electric jazz ever recorded. It stands on the brink of what was to be Miles's most difficult decade, artistically and personally. The roiling anthems of *Dark Magus*, *Agharta* and *Pangaea*, guitar- and organ-heavy, with the scanty trumpet parts distorted and wah-wahed almost out of existence, weren't considered releasable in the United States and originally appeared only in Japan. After that, illness closed in and Miles disappeared for the rest of the decade, an almost forgotten figure until the pained, painful comeback of the early 1980s.

Invisibility almost always leads to mythology. With no new records coming, fans pored over the back catalogue and critics cemented into consensus a whole set of casually unsubstantiated clichés about the trumpeter: that he had given up on jazz entirely, that his trumpet playing had always been "minimal" (a notion that dogged him throughout his career, no matter how many notes he packed into his solos), that he had never been a sufficiently able technician to manage the fast transitions of bebop, even that music mattered to him less than a certain mode of presentation. This myth can hardly survive *The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions*, which highlights Miles's mastery of improvisation at furious levels of speed and intensity. It certainly can't survive the even more remarkable *At the Blackhawk*.

Long disparaged (by, among others, Miles himself) as an uninspired, "transitional" work, *At the Blackhawk* is long overdue for reappraisal. Miles's first official live recording, it was taped on April 21–22, 1961, when he was just a few weeks shy of his thirty-fifth birthday. Like many a historical text before it, the record Columbia released that year was left full of lacunae and inconsistencies. Different release versions featured different songs; bootlegs circulated with incorrect titles; completist collectors were obliged to make do with Japanese liner notes. Now, after more than forty years, it is finally possible to hear all the music played on those two spring nights, spread over four ear-opening CDs.

The perfectionist Miles had thus far resisted making a club recording, but he was open to trying new things, since he was nearing the end of one of the most creative periods of his career. Miles had recently terminated an extraordinary but often troubled working relationship with John Coltrane. Trane was initially replaced by Sonny Stitt, a contemporary of Charlie Parker. But Stitt probably sounded like too much of a throwback for Miles, who soon re-

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placed him with funky hard-bop tenor Hank Mobley. Despite an impressive pedigree of Blue Note releases, and despite the obvious attraction to Miles of a terser improvisor than Coltrane, whose solos could last close to an hour, Mobley seemed an improbable choice.

It was, however, consistent with other changes in the band, and with the same pattern of changes one sees in the late 1960s. Quite simply, Miles was looking for a "blacker" sound, for a less self-conscious and virtuosic approach than Coltrane's. This explains his attraction later to Michael Henderson and Steve Grossman, both relatively raw teenagers. Mobley was far from that—in 1961, he was 31 and with a sequence of Blue Note and Savoy discs already to his credit. Yet he was deeply rooted in the blues and temperamentally averse to using ten notes when one would do. In his memoir, written with Quincy Troupe, Miles complained, "Playing with Hank just wasn't fun for me; he didn't stimulate my imagination." Maybe so—but the evidence on record suggests otherwise.

Miles had also recently replaced his pianist, Bill Evans, with the 30-year-old Jamaican-born Wynton Kelly, a rhythmic, blues-based player whose work contrasted sharply with Evans's Debussian lyricism and who could be expected to fit in with Mobley's curiously hybrid tough-tender sound. The other members of the rhythm section—bassist Paul Chambers and the redoubtable Jimmy Cobb—had played on *Kind of Blue*, Miles's 1959 masterwork. Even so, the overall sound of the group had changed significantly, and in a way that challenges the consensus view of Miles's development in the 1960s.

As a document, the *At the Blackhawk* boxed set is clearly a different animal from *The Complete Jack Johnson Sessions*. The latter is a tissue of studio takes, music made with a certain sense of history being unmade, not only in the fact that we perceive it running through the projector backward—finished artifact first, raw components afterward—but also because Miles was deeply concerned with how history had dealt with a black hero like Johnson. There was no such hidden drama in 1961, no program to be followed and no effort to attract a new audience. The *Blackhawk* material is the record of a club engagement, offering, or so it would seem, the traditional satisfaction of straight-ahead jazz rather than the *frisson* of innovation. But, modest as they seem, these are revelatory recordings, and they prompt a wholesale reassessment of Miles's mid-career. Is the playing cool? Minimal? Airy? Uneasy with bebop? Not a bit of it. Miles's two nights at the Blackhawk witness some of his fieriest and most loquacious playing and some of his most complex harmonic improvisation. With supreme irony, almost the first thing one hears at the start of the first night, a Friday, is Miles fluffing his intro to a bebop classic, Sonny Rollins's "Oleo." He makes up for it immediately and delivers a blazing solo that must count as one of his best of the period.

Long disparaged as an uninspired, 'transitional' work, At the Blackhawk *contains some of Miles's purest jazz performances.*

The opening set of *At the Blackhawk* is dominated by a reading of the staple "No Blues," which comes in at more than seventeen minutes. Here again both Miles and Mobley are in their element, but the key to this band is Kelly's work on piano. Kelly has extraordinary hand speed, even greater quickness of thought and exactly the kind of spatial awareness Miles must have looked for in an accompanist. His fast, bluesy piano runs anticipate the horns, support them and pick up their cues almost telepathically. Kelly almost never cuts across Miles or the somewhat lumbering Mobley, and he never plays a facile or merely workmanlike phrase. Every note he plays counts.

After a long, passionate interpretation of Cole Porter's "All of You," the second set continues with another of the previously unreleased tracks, a theme known as "Teo," after Miles's producer, but here unaccountably titled "Neo." How new it is in this interpretation is hard to gauge. It is not so much reharmonized as industrially strengthened. Kelly puts unbreakable spider-wires across the chords, Cobb and Chambers rev up the pulse and Miles fires off strings of notes that are as elaborate in construction as anything he had committed to record. It's a tune that turns up again on the Saturday night, along with versions of "No Blues," "If I Were a Bell," "On Green Dolphin Street," "I Thought About You" and the little set closer, "Love, I've Found You," which functions much like "The Theme" and rounds things off. After his uneasy pick-up, Miles doesn't choose to revisit "Oleo" but starts off at a rather more familiar velocity with the release version of "If I Were a Bell." The contrast between the two versions of the Frank Loesser standard would be hard to exaggerate. Whereas on Friday, starting off the third set Miles attacks the tune as if it were an air-raid warning, on Saturday he takes it with a much easier swing and bounce and relies on Kelly to fill in the harmony. He's back on the attack for an unbelievably fast version of "So What," which almost doubles the tempo of the version on *Kind of Blue*. Kelly's open chords leave the field wide open for both Davis and Mobley.

Richard Carpenter's composition "Walkin'" had been the centerpiece of the previous night's second set, despite being marred by articulation problems and a couple of missed cues. The Saturday version is more than a tour de force. In twelve astonishing minutes, Miles deconstructs the tune. Five minutes in, he remakes it again as Kelly and Mobley join him in new harmonic territory. The intensity of Miles's playing is remarkable. His solo is rich, maximal and far from introverted; he sounds almost malevolently focused.

There is nothing else quite as good on any of the four CDs. From a historical point of view, the inclusion of a complete late set from Saturday night—"I Thought About You," "Someday My Prince Will Come" and a double-time "Softly as in a Morning Sunrise"—is very important, not least because it illustrates the unexpectedly hard-swinging nature of this lineup. Leaving aside a few bad cues, miscounts (on Miles's part, largely) and a foreshortened "Autumn Leaves," which starts a little late because the tape machine wasn't switched on, it's hard to see why all this material hasn't been released sooner.

The *Blackhawk* sessions are among Miles's purest jazz performances. These are the proof that he could cut it as a hard-blowing and straight-ahead jazz musician, terms he probably regarded as demeaning even as he picked up his campaign medals. His seeming lack of interest in this kind of improvisation in later years didn't disguise a lack of ability. Miles's outward cool and sophistication ironically camouflaged a roots artist who constantly tried to take jazz back to the basics, in blues, dance and popular song.

Recognizing all this in turn reshapes our image of Miles in later years. Take that same hard-blowing, blues-laden bopper and see if you can still find him in 1969, when Miles was presumed to be off on another riff entirely. Is he there? On the evidence of Jack Johnson's "Right Off," emphatically yes. Davis may have changed obsessively, but he also obsessively remained the same, true to the rootstocks and wellsprings of jazz all the way from Buddy Bolden and Louis Armstrong to the revolutionary realignment of bebop.

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Whatever its motivation and pitfalls, these most recent reissues have subtly changed our awareness of Miles in the round and not just in the minute detail. *A Tribute to Jack Johnson* stands as a more important and more radical work than *Bitches Brew*, which now seems partial and compromised, keeping too much of a footing in an older style. It is also a project on which Miles feels able to let rip at what he did best, playing the trumpet. *At the Blackhawk* does something rather different. It does not present a great jazz musician as ambitious *auteur* but as a passionate exponent of a great vernacular art form. The 1961 band spoke with a common plainness of purpose. Mobley and Kelly were important factors in that, but it was Miles Davis's own strong utterance that makes these restored performances so compelling.

Norman Mailer, who crossed paths and swords with Miles at least once, wrote sententiously about trying to "capture the Prince of Truth in the act of switching a style." The Prince of Darkness changed styles less often than he pretended. Miles spoke of change as if it were both vocation and burden, and superficially the Miles of 1971 was a very different artist from the Miles of a decade earlier. Look deeper, though, and it is a consistency of purpose and language that comes through. Miles changed in order to remain the same, and to remain true to what is still a radical understanding of what black American music is about. ■

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There have never been many who could pull this off—maybe a dozen or two across the twentieth century, when the genre burgeoned. Anna Deavere Smith, Danny Hoch and Lily Tomlin are among the few living ones: virtuosic mimics and also penetrating social critics who use themselves as documentary cameras and editorializing mirrors. They negotiate the dicey line between mimicry and mockery partly by dint of fascination with details. It's the details that distinguish this sort of talent from that of the ordinary standup or sketch comic. Such performers have an intimacy with and affection for the people they imitate that a mere jester doesn't. We may laugh at their impersonations, but we recognize the critical instinct behind their acts of observation.

Add to this exclusive company a relative newcomer who has just returned to the New York scene after a Hollywood detour that could easily have destroyed her. Sarah Jones is a 29-year-old whose first big break was winning the 1997 Nuyorican Poets Café Grand Slam Championship. The solo show she developed at Nuyorican, *Surface Transit*, was in a class by itself at the PS 122 "Hip-Hop Theater Festival," where it played in 2000, later moving to American Place Theater. In it, Jones—a tall, strong, slender, dark-skinned woman of mixed-race parentage—portrayed, among others, an elderly, narrow-minded Jewish busybody, a Russian-immigrant widow of an American soldier, a bigoted Italian-American male cop, an unemployed British actress and blazing young rappers of both sexes, all with meticulous precision and merciless humor.

At the time, most critics described *Surface Transit*'s political content by explaining its stories; the characters were linked through thin and occasionally tenuous plot strands involving "issues" like xenophobia, sexual exploitation and homophobia. The truth is, though, as with all the best work of this kind, the emotional and political power really lay in the relationship of the teller to the tales. The more transformative and elastic a solo actor is, oddly enough, the more interesting his or her self becomes to the audience, since it is the amazing instrument of interpretation that prods our critical thinking about the various characters. Who is this person, one wonders, whose astonishing chameleonesque exertions enable us to congratulate ourselves on the marvelous flexibility of our imaginations?

Jones, as it happens, has fought several public battles over the past few years that are worth describing in brief because they inform her new solo piece, *Bridge & Tunnel*, recently opened at 45 Bleecker Street Theater with Meryl Streep as a co-producer. In the wake of *Surface Transit* Jones accepted two commissions: one from Gloria Steinem, Equality Now and the Ford Foundation to create a piece focusing on the various laws oppressing women around the world (*Women Can't Wait*, performed at the United Nations International Conference on Women's Rights in the summer of 2000); the other from the National Immigration Forum for a work about immigrants (*Waking the American Dream*, performed in Washington and then removed from Jones's performance schedule after September 11).

Meanwhile, in May 2001, the FCC—beginning a rash of indecency citations under the new chairmanship of Michael Powell—slapped the Oregon nonprofit radio station KBOO with a $7,000 fine for broadcasting Jones's "patently offensive" hip-hop poem "Your Revolution." This poem, used in *Surface Transit*, is a feminist tribute to Gil Scott-Heron's "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" that parodies gangsta rap's degrading language about women. (Jones: "Your revolution will not happen between these thighs.... The real revolution ain't about bootie size/The Versaces you buys/Or the Lexus you drives.") Almost two years of legal struggle ensued, during which the poem was effectively banned from the same airwaves that played misogynistic LL Cool J and Notorious B.I.G. lyrics with impunity. In the end the commission rescinded its ruling rather than file an explanatory brief in federal appeals court.

American celebrity being what it is, the publicity of the indecency flap earned Jones

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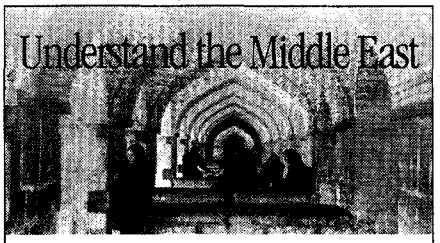

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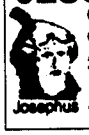

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entree to Hollywood. As she tells it, her courtship there was dominated by admirers who swore they understood her sensibility only to approach her with insultingly stereotypical roles. At a panel two years ago, she described these lucrative but degrading proposals, including a DeNiro vehicle where she was supposed to play "a high-class call girl with many voices," and an offer of politically neutered sketch work on MTV's "Lyricist Lounge": "Anyone from Haiti or any area of the Caribbean is a voodoo princess. I got a lot of them, also all kinda rastas, drug dealers, drug dealers' girlfriends… the pregnant wife who cooks rice, the crazy sister-in-law, but never was there an offer to *just be any kind of a human being.*" Spike Lee cast her in *Bamboozled* but cut all but a glimpse of her from the finished film. Recently, she sold a sketch-comedy pilot to Bravo, made entirely on her own terms.

Directed by Tony Taccone, *Bridge & Tunnel* is a thorough reworking of her piece *Waking the American Dream*, set at the fourth annual gathering of a group called "I.A.M.A.P.O.E.T.T.O.O." (go to the show to find out what it stands for) at a hall in south Queens called Bridge & Tunnel Café. The host is a goofy but clever Pakistani named Mohammed Ali, whom Jones plays with a dead-on accent and a wonderfully stiff comportment, chopping the air with his fists when laughing at his own dumb jokes. Relentlessly cheerful, Mohammed began organizing immigrant poets on the Internet before gathering them in person, and his definition of poetry is very loose, including storytelling, dance, "anything you want to share." Thus Jones concocts an uninhibited forum for her fourteen different characters, all hungry to assert selves and points of view they feel have been quashed, maligned or ignored.

Her shifts between characters are executed in seconds, with nothing more than a change of jacket or head covering. Gladys, a winningly sassy Jamaican whom Mohammed has to retrieve from the bathroom, struts onto the stage with a hand on her swayback hip, introduces herself as a "poet/performer/playwright/spoken-word artist/actress," disses Colin Powell (father of Michael, the FCC chairman, coincidentally) and then performs an absurdly exaggerated dance about her arrival in New York in the middle of winter, shouting, "Cold, cold, cold, Lord, why so damn cold?" Juan José, a Mexican in a wheelchair who somberly jokes that "I just rolled in from California, and boy are my arms tired," says his verse was born of disgust with the lurid depiction of his country in the Brad Pitt/Julia Roberts movie *The Mexican*. His poem tells of his wife's harrowing journey to the United States inside the metal ceiling of a bus, after which she found Juan, a day laborer, near death from a construction accident caused by rickety scaffolding. Characters like these, whose eloquence is in their candor, even their clumsiness, alternate with others endowed with more obvious verbal grace.

One of the main joys of *Bridge & Tunnel* is the way Jones uses its frame shamelessly to show off her daunting poetic versatility. She plainly takes as much pleasure in composing sparkling poetry in wildly different voices as she does in mimicking the various accents. Here is Yajaira, a 15-year-old Dominican girl from the Bronx who wears a cheerleading jacket and keeps wiping her nose:

> …daffodil is midnight sun
> hazy hot and humid
> heavy sixteen-year-old heart
> she had six weeks' worth of
> newborn diapers
> in her squeaky shopping cart
> it sounded like bed springs
> sounded like the kinds of things
> she encountered enroute
> from point A to point B
> the nondescript trip from
> ghetto cradle to ghetto heaven

And here is Bao, a Vietnamese-American kid in a kung fu shirt who speaks without a foreign accent and with comic abruptness, in slam mode:

> This is not a model
> Minority poem
> About hardworking
> Straight-A students
> Who find freedom on TRL
> This is not
> The part where I get drunk and sing
> Folk songs for my white Frat Brothers
> Or win an Oscar
> For Crouching Tailor Hidden
> Drycleaner…
> This poem is a slur-proof shield
> And an arsenal of anger to wield
> Every time someone wants a medal from
> me cause
> They've feng shui'd their pad
> This poem is for the Vietnamese history
> chapter
> My school never had

It's been said that hip-hop culture is a bridge between worlds that normally regard one another with mutual suspicion, hostility and envy. Hip-hop's astonishing commercial success will probably render that idea hollow in the near future. At the moment, though, it's still possible to root for the crossover dreams of a kid like Bao, and to

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cheer on characters like Mrs. Ling, a prim Chinese woman who stands up to speak about her daughter's lesbianism, and Rose Aimée, a bluff Haitian woman who fumes over a bigoted realtor. In Jones's utopian cafe, the bigots are all laughable and the bridges and tunnels are all as sturdy and beloved as the Statue of Liberty. It's a beautiful, inspiring vision that, depending on your point of view, is as fragile or as unyielding as the consummate mirror-artist at its center. ■

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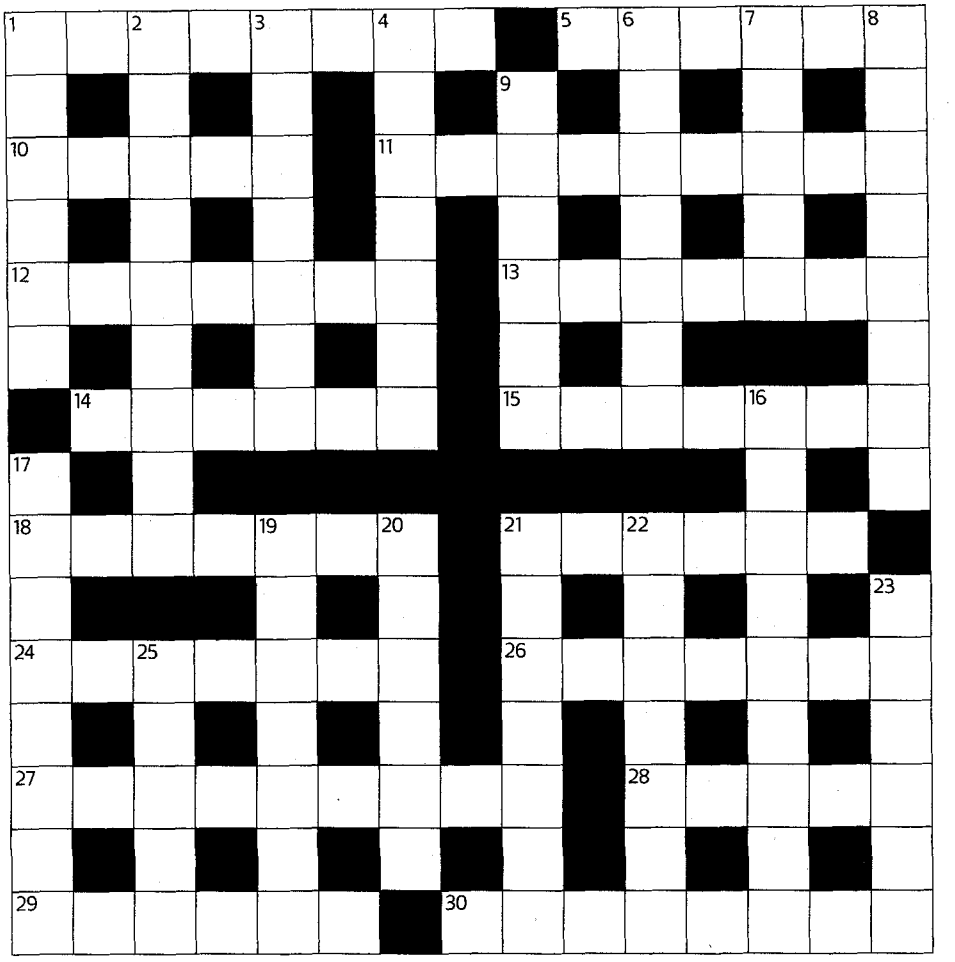

ACROSS

1 and **5** He was concerned about the location of the snows of yesteryear, and could become a villain of scorn. (8,6)

10 A onetime deed, to be specific. (5)

11 In the construction business, are they just the result of deceptive actions? (3-2,4)

12 In short, a company has possibly short connections—their make-up being legion. (7)

13 Displaying a lot of nerve, that is, in the club at least! (7)

14 Was his name changed from Ernest, being a churchman and writer? (6)

15 It offers a sound return, but it makes the niche go to pieces. (7)

18 What one may hope to do if the books get dirty or lost. (7)

21 How the weasel sounded when put in hock, as the British say. (6)

24 A rather classic brewer presenting arms, possibly, about the supply of eggs. (7)

26 It's all right to get a bunch of E's and F's, being such a good painter. (7)

27 Does it bring the nerve to the surface, perhaps making 9 close? (9)

28 and **7** down Are such as Leo deemed revolting, when these take place? (10)

29 and **30** Some priests look this way, which is a safe bet, moneywise. (4,10)

DOWN

1 and **17** It doesn't mean putting on Paris frocks—but it's still a put-on for some diners. (6,8)

2 A way east has a shaky end, in rather desultory fashion. (9)

3 Recreate this, possibly, if missing only one of several points with one's delivery being spread, as they say. (7)

4 When you reach one do you have to admit you are dated... (7)

6 ...or just proclaim you are a beauty from Georgia and kick one out of the office? (7)

7 See 28 across

8 Mis-sent with urges to make what retirees hope to hatch? (4,4)

9 Certainly not rickety as a place to keep the old gray mare! (6)

16 A fine, sort of, on one of those old morality tales, being hard to describe. (9)

17 See 1 down

19 The composer of 6 and 5, with alid that needs repair. (7)

20 Enthusiastic in a slangy way, right on the grain, which is wrong. (6)

21 One of the basic units of speech, which seems to imply, "Call me back!" (7)

22 One of a dancing pair that might make the landing place unsafe. (7)

23 One of a patriotic group in Judea, seeming to laze around and about. (6)

25 Act wrongly, when I'm coming up, and the sod needs turning over. (5)

PUZZLED? No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules" send for those of Mr. Lewis to: Puzzled, The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, or access our website at www.thenation.com/about/crossword.mhtml.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2931

S	E	C	O	N	D	■	H	A	N	D	B	O	O	K
C	■	A	■	O	■	O	■	M	■	O	■	R	■	I
H	A	R	R	I	E	R	■	U	L	U	L	A	N	T
O	■	B	■	S	■	A	■	S	■	B	■	C	■	B
O	Z	O	N	E	■	T	H	E	■	■	T	U	L	S	A
L	■	Y	■	■	■	O	■	■	■	■	■	E	■	G
O	A	S	I	S	■	R	O	C	K	R	O	S	E	■
F	■	■	■	A	■	I	■	L	■	E	■	■	■	W
■	A	N	E	C	D	O	T	E	■	D	I	T	C	H
W	■	A	■	■	■	■	■	A	■	■	■	U	■	I
H	A	I	F	A	■	F	O	R	■	B	I	R	D	S
A	■	R	■	X	■	A	■	O	■	O	■	N	■	P
L	O	O	K	I	N	G	■	F	I	N	E	S	S	E
E	■	B	■	O	■	A	■	F	■	E	■	I	■	R
S	W	I	M	M	I	N	G	■	T	R	U	N	K	S

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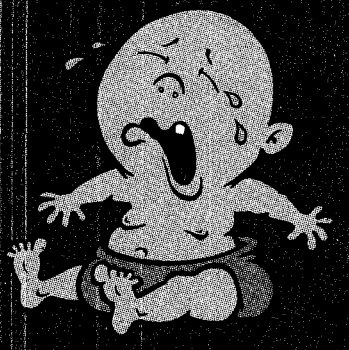
WE DIDN'T WHINE

ABOUT THE PATRIOT ACT

STRIPPING

OUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS.



WE GOT A KEY PROVISION RULED UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND THROWN OUT.

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